

THE PRESENTIMENT.

BY MRS. MARY V. SPENCER.

I CANNOT say that I am a believer in presentiments, though, if I were, I might find authority among the philosophers of all ages, not even excepting the present enlightened one. But curious coincidences often occur which are calculated to shake skepticism. One of these has been related to me as happening within the present century.

It was a beautiful evening that two lovers stood hand-in-hand, at the moment of parting for a separation of a week. A sadness, during the last hour, had imperceptibly stolen over them, and the youth now gave utterance to the thoughts which he had in vain striven to keep down.

"In a week I shall return," he said. "Watch for me on the seventh day; and if I come not know that I am no more. I feel a presentiment of harm, as if we were never to meet again."

By a strange coincidence his betrothed had felt the same vague fear, though she too had labored to conceal it. Nor would she now betray the alarm that filled her eyes with unbidden tears.

"Nay! it is but a foolish thought," she said—"let us pray that these fears prove idle. I will meet you here on the seventh day, and we will laugh at our alarm."

"Living or dead!" said the lover solemnly, unchanged by her affected gaiety of tone: then, not trusting himself to further words, he pressed her hand and departed.

What an age does the separation of a few days seem to lovers! Every unoccupied moment is then sacredly given to thoughts of the absent object; and the hours are counted until his return. It was so now with Frederick and the sweet girl to whom he was betrothed. As he rolled along in the diligence, he reclined in one corner and drawing his cap over his eyes, refused conversation that he might think of his Margaret; while she, in her chamber, often paused and laid down the work from her hands to muse on her absent lover.

But time, however laggard he may appear, moves steadily on; and the week, which to Frederick had seemed a month, was now past. It was the seventh day. He was already within a few miles of his native town, though evening had not closed in, so that he felt sure of meeting his betrothed according to his promise. The remembrance of their solemnity at parting occurred, and now that the week had passed without peril he felt inclined to laugh at his fears. Indulging in sweet, dreamy fancies he lay back in the diligence, until at length his visions changed

insensibly from waking ones to those of sleep. Suddenly two or three quick strokes of a bell smote on his ear, and he started up broad awake.

"What can that mean? Where are we?" were his inquiries, and those of his fellow passengers, most of whom also had been slumbering.

As they spoke they looked forth and saw that they were crossing the sandy plain in the vicinity of the city, the dark buildings of which were discernible, through the gloom of the gathering twilight a short league ahead. But even at that distance the large alarm bell on the town hall could be heard, clanging out fierce and quick, in tones of terror. Simultaneously too a strong red glare shot up into the sky, spreading rapidly on either side, until a fourth of the city appeared to be in flames.

"Drive on quick—for heaven's sake!—put them to a gallop!" exclaimed the passengers, alarmed for the safety of their homes; and none spoke more urgently than Frederick, who beheld with alarm the flames rapidly spreading to that quarter of the city inhabited by his betrothed.

The driver whipped his horses; but their gait, though rapid, failed to satisfy the excited passengers. Each one exaggerated the probable danger to his family, and as the conflagration rapidly extended, the alarm became serious. But no one suffered like Frederick. Over that portion of the city inhabited by his betrothed the flames appeared to be raging with terrible, and increasing violence; and aware that every family must be fully occupied with itself, he trembled for the fate of Margaret, who was an orphan, and had no natural protector now that he was absent.

And now louder and louder tolled the great bell, while a hundred others, from every quarter of the mighty city, joined in the clamor. The whole eastern horizon was a mass of fire, the light of which danced on the steeples and other lofty objects, while the roar of the conflagration was like the rush of the Danube in flood. Faster and faster the diligence was urged along, for its inmates were now almost frantic, and when at last it stopped, each man leaped breathlessly from his seat, and regardless of his baggage hurried to that quarter of the city which was the scene of the disaster, for it was there that most of the trading classes, such as were the usual travellers in the diligence, resided, and the combustible nature of the high wooden buildings promised, now that the conflagration had got headway, to afford but little time for females, who might happen to be alone in them, to escape.

The bell tolled on. Clang upon clang shook the air, each note striking the nerves with more painful acuteness than the last. As they approached the burning quarter Frederick saw that

what he had feared was too true, and that the fire was rapidly surrounding, if it had not already surrounded, the square where Margaret resided. Youth and despair gave wings to his feet, and he flew on, leaving his companions far behind. He was now on the outskirts of the conflagration. Huge piles of furniture were accumulated in the streets, near which stood houseless females and children weeping; crowds of men hurried to and fro shouting hoarsely and passing water-buckets to the firemen; while a body of soldiery was occupied in laying a train to a block of houses, which soon blew up with a tremendous explosion.

Regardless of these things Frederick hurried on. He had but one thought, it was to save his betrothed or perish in the attempt. The winding streets of the old town prevented him from seeing, as yet, whether the square occupied by Margaret was still untouched, and he was a prey to suspense, more terrible than the worst certainty. At last he caught a glimpse of the house in the distance. It was still safe, but the way thither was long, and through a thousand dangers. Already the sparks began to shower around him: the heat, too, was becoming excessive: and fewer and fewer inhabitants crossed his path, for all seemed to shun this devoted quarter.

He was now opposite the great square, which, on every side, was a mass of fire. The parish church, which fronted it, and which had withstood the storms of centuries, had caught, and was now wrapped in flames, which burst from all the windows and roared up through the lofty steeple as through the chimney of a furnace. The square was nearly deserted, and on every hand the inhabitants had long since fled from their habitations. But the old sexton of the church, either unable or unwilling to leave his post, was seen, high up in the tower, amid the surging fire; and as it mounted around him, he began to chime the usual evening service. There was something inexpressibly solemn in that hymn sounded thus from the midst of the conflagration. Higher and fiercer rose the flames, and louder chimed the bells, until, at last, with a crash, tower and ringer came to the earth. But Frederick heeded not even this; for, at that moment, the wind partially shifted and the flames went roaring down toward the house that held all which was dear to him on earth.

The people could now be seen hurrying in every direction from the threatened district. Here were fathers bearing the sick, there mothers carrying their babes, yonder little children who could scarcely walk tottering along crying after their parents: affrighted looks were seen, and wild prayers heard on every hand. The voice of the advancing conflagration was like the sound of

the sea in a storm, or the combined howl of thousands of hungry wolves. And now the streets began to grow more deserted. At intervals were heard the shriek of some deserted and despairing invalid, or the fall of the house that buried him forever. The street in which Margaret resided was now blocked up, at its furthest end, by the flames, which were coming down with frightful rapidity. Yet Frederick had seen nothing of his betrothed, though he had not moved his eyes from the building since he entered the square. She must be in the house, deserted and alone. The thought nerved him to madness: he gained the door and dashed in.

The house was already full of smoke. The upper rooms were on fire. He knew the apartments where Margaret resided, but they were distant, and the way was narrow and crooked. Yet he pressed on. The smoke became thicker so that he could scarcely see, and the atmosphere was almost insupportable from the stifling heat. Still he groped his path along, and at last reached the chamber of Margaret. She was not there. He called to her: no answer replied. He began to fear she had already perished, when he bethought him of her sitting-room, which opened, by a door, from the one he was in. He rushed through, and found her lying insensible and alone before the crucifix, for, as he feared, the servants had all fled.

He raised her to his shoulders, but how was he to escape? He could hear the crackle of the approaching flames, and the staircase was obscured with smoke. But he dashed boldly toward it and groped his way to the street; and never was breath of air more grateful than that which, though hot, and at any other time stifling, relieved him in the open street. Yet, even here, all hope of escape appeared cut off. On every side of him heaved a sea of fire. The clang of the distant bells was scarcely distinguishable in the roar of the surrounding flames. Not a human being was visible. He was alone.

In this emergency he remembered an old tunnel which he had been told, when a boy, had once existed in this quarter of the town, to carry off the waters of several large springs that had once formed a stream herabouts. If the entrance to this conduit could be discovered, he might yet escape. The happy thought re-animated him, and though nearly fainting, he suddenly gained the strength of a giant. Regardless of the falling houses, he continued his search, and, at last, was crowned with success. The opening to the tunnel was almost choked up with rubbish; but it was large enough to afford an entrance, and in it he sought refuge with his fainting charge.

Some days afterward, when the conflagration

was subdued, a wedding party left the altar, and as the bride leaned fondly on her husband's arm, she whispered,

"Frederick! I was wrong to laugh at your presentiment and my own; for God sees all, and may sometimes kindly will that we should have warning of things to come."

Perhaps she was right, perhaps not. But who can tell?



DECEMBER, 1844.

THE VICTIM OF PRIDE.

BY MRS. P. W. CAROTHERS.

It was twilight. The soft rose clouds of evening had faded to a silvery grey, a light dew was cooling the sultry air, the hum of the bee was stilled, and a profound repose brooded over the scene. A young girl sat in the stoup of a farm-house of small dimensions in New England, and, save the tapping of her foot upon the floor, there was nought to break the quiet solitude of the "gloaming," as the Scotch poetically call the evening hour.

But there was no quiet in the bosom of the solitary girl, but rather the raging of a volcano, when all should have been calm as the surrounding scene, pure as the vault above.

A light footstep on the green sward announced the approach of some one, and a tall figure stooped beneath the arching vines that crossed the little porch and took a seat beside the girl, who shrunk back into the furthest corner from his approach.

"How is this, Hope, I thought you wished to see me. I came by your own appointment, and yet you give me no welcome—nay! you shrink from me as if my presence was detestable."

For several minutes Hope sat with her hands tightly passed over her brow, and answered nought to the calm, passionless address of her lover, for such *had been* the young man who sat beside her. Slowly Hope withdrew her hand and raised her head, but had there been light enough to have marked the lustrous flashing of her eye—the deep crimson of her brow, the most unpractised observer would have felt that something more than maidenly shame had sent that current of warm blood to color the temples that usually threw back a halo of light from her white brow. But a demon had taken possession of that young heart, and henceforth would be quenched forever the light of life.

Henry Thornton drew closer to her side, and though unable to comprehend the deep emotions that convulsed every pulsation of the delicate wrist he held, yet he felt sorry for the girl he

had trifled with, and tried to console her for what he imagined would be but a temporary grief.

"Dearest Hope," said he in the softest accents, "dearest Hope, believe me if I were old enough and rich enough to please myself in the choice of a wife, I would prefer you to the whole world, and with pride and pleasure would exhibit my New England beauty to my southern relations. But I am not of age, and were I to marry it would break my mother's heart, and my father would not hesitate a moment to turn me penniless in the world, and a pretty figure I should cut among you Yankees with a wife and no means to maintain her, and I am sure I should never learn to 'shift along,' as your brother calls living by one's wits; and as for labor, I am certain I should starve at it."

There was a curl of scornful irony around the lip of Hope as she listened to the frank expression of the southern student of his inability to maintain a wife.

"And this then is the end of your immortal passion," said she in deep, bitter, ironical tones: "this the end of your eternal constancy."

"Nay! Hope, what *could* you expect from a boy of twenty?"

"Truth and sincerity," she abruptly interrupted. "When you proffered me your heart I frankly gave you mine in exchange, before I knew how worthless was the thing for which I had bartered it. That knowledge came too late to save the profanation. I *had* loved with all the depth and strength of woman's love, and though the idol was but gilded dust, yet it had received the holiest offering of life. I can never offer the desecrated affections of that heart at another shrine. Henceforth they remain locked in the profoundest depths of silent sufferance, and no man shall ever stir a thrill of agony in my desolated heart—but think not I forgive the evil thus wantonly inflicted! You, Henry Thornton, scorn me. I, a poor laborer's daughter, you deem too low to share the lofty lot that fortune and not your own merits has called you to, and you, the owner of broad lands and numerous slaves, blush at loving the poor New England maiden; but I

will live to prove your evil genius. I sent for you to tell you this, to tell you how profoundly I hold in contempt your silly prejudices of rank and birth, and how easily I could mould you to my will did it comport with that will to chain my destiny to the cold, selfish, soulless being who could win the heart of a lowly maiden and then throw it by like a plucked weed. I sent for you to receive my parting vows of constancy. Yes! you will think of me bitterly hereafter when the hollow world has lost its gloss, and true hearts are far from you. Then you will wish you had been a lowly laborer with one devoted friend, rather than the gilded mirror of fortune. Farewell—we will meet *once* more, and only once—but that will be in after years. Go!”—as she spoke she extended her hand to Thornton, and as he took it he remarked it was icy cold, and a slight shudder thrilled his nerves at the contact, but ere he could speak she had withdrawn it and vanished into the house. For some time the youth sat absorbed in a deep reverie, and his feelings appeared painfully excited, for the full moon was shedding her mellow light full upon his features, and the shadows that crossed his usually joyous brow told of a strong mental conflict. Starting up he called “Hope,” first in a low, then in a louder key; but receiving no answer, he passed into the dwelling. It seemed that his search was ineffectual as his calls, for issuing from the low, trellised door of the stoup with compressed lips and frowning brow, that the clear moonlight plainly revealed, he made a hasty retreat from the farm-house; his tall figure occasionally emerging from the shaded lanes into the open meadows, as he took the most direct road to the town.

The father of young Thornton had sent him while quite young to an eastern college, and every season he returned home to his delighted parents improved in mental as well as personal graces. Rich, high bred, and somewhat remarkable for superior abilities, it never occurred to the father that *his* son could form a connexion without the pale of that aristocratic circle in which he was born; and so thoroughly imbued was the son with the prejudices of *caste* that he never anticipated danger in wooing the beautiful cottager. And when his father wrote him word for the first time to remain in the vicinity of the college during the vacation, as he and his mother were absent from home, he merely regarded it as a good opportunity to pursue an idle flirtation. And yet Thornton was an honorable minded young man, and intended evil least of all to the innocent girl whom he so much admired, but with the thoughtlessness of youth he paused not to consider whether he might not

grasp too rudely the beautiful butterfly he was pursuing.

Returning late one afternoon from an excursion on horseback, he was caught in a thunder storm, and his horse proving restive, the father of Hope invited him to take shelter with him and his sons in their barn. The rain increasing as night approached, Thornton was glad to accept the farmer's offer of supper and a bed; and the beauty of Hope proved an inducement to linger as long on the following morning as possible, and to render himself so agreeable to the farmer's sons as to induce them to invite a return. Thornton soon discovered that they were fond of gunning, and he had the best rifles in the world—fond of fishing, and his own tackle he brought from the south he must show them. In short a wonderful sympathy in tastes was discoverable in the young southerner and the Yankee boys—and Thornton took care to make his visits welcome alike to the old and young. With proverbial shrewdness the father soon learned to mark the glow of admiration and pleasure that marked the approach of his beautiful daughter in the expressive face of the stranger, and he permitted his hopes for her worldly advancement to silence the low whisper of wisdom, that would have told him she could never be happy among the proud relations of the rich southerner. Soon the tale of love was poured into ears that had never stooped to listen to another. Very beautiful and very gifted, Hope had many admirers, but no lovers, and his were the first tones of passion that had thrilled the latent chords that were doomed to give but one wild gush of music, and then be stilled forever. His manly beauty and finished grace of manner excited her warmest admiration. His poetic fervor and cultivated intellect had awakened her fancy, and his delicate tenderness subdued her to the fondest devotion. She loved him with a depth of idolatry that colder natures could not understand, and that almost startled its object. But there was much wanting about the beautiful rustic to fix the fastidious fancy of the high bred boy. True, she was lovely as a poet's vision, but then he daily saw her performing the most menial offices in her father's household, and it caused him to feel a secret disgust, so much are we the slaves of early education. About this time too he received a letter from a cousin, a very gay, but a very heartless girl, who was a perfect votary of fashion. She had been his occasional playmate in childhood, and still corresponded with her rich relation. She wielded a pen of most unsparing satire, and this time she attempted to amuse Thornton by a burlesque description of a marriage between one of their old friends and a modest country girl, whom he had chosen in

preference to her own ladyship, it had been whispered among her friends. Be that as it may, she rendered the affair supremely ridiculous in the eyes of a boy who had not yet learned to brave the arrows of ridicule, and from that hour his passion for Hope ceased. Whenever he remarked, and henceforth he was keen to remark, any of these *gaucheries* that a young rustic commits so unconsciously, a deep blush would suffuse his cheek, and the image of his own elegant and dignified mother would loom up before his imagination in terrifying vividness. Hope, with the intuitive delicacy of perception that marks a loving woman, soon learned to *feel* when his eyes suddenly shaded, and in the very humility of love she strove to please until the very exertion became distasteful to its object. With the most acute sorrow Hope marked the phases of his cooling regard; she had to disbelieve the evidences of her own senses, and hoped that it was the very strength of her own passion that caused her to distrust his. Thus the summer wore away, and autumn with its golden sunlight and rich fruits came on. A nutting party of neighboring boys and girls had been made, and Thornton chose to join them. They repaired to the skirts of a wood where the hazel copse was showering its brown treasures upon the checkered green sward, while the tall forest trees which the vine had climbed to its topmost boughs, afforded a shade beneath which the company and happy young people were seated after the walk. There was a pretty young girl among them about Hope's age, whose silly jealousy of Hope's superior beauty had ever made her an unpleasant companion, and on this evening in the very caprice of youth Thornton selected this girl from the rest, and while the rest of the party were gaily nutting among the bushes, they sat apart, and the low, modulated tones of the sutherlander, and the sly yet triumphant glances of the girl at once betrayed to Hope that he was trifling with her. This was too much for her proud nature. "He would betray another fool," she muttered to herself. She closed her eyes and tried to clear the mists of passion from her mind, while she looked back through the few blissful months of her past existence, and strange to say she was startled by remembering now, for the first time, that he had never wooed her for his bride—never named her in conjunction with the wife of his manhood. "Have I been but the toy of his leisure, to be abandoned when his love wavers?" she bitterly thought; but Hope's quiet manner precluded any observations from her companions, and she compelled herself to wear her usual demeanor. From that hour the demon of Pride entered the heart of Hope, and to his promptings she sacrificed herself.

Years passed, and Colonel Thornton had won high rank on the battle grounds of his country. Civil honors flow rapidly upon a military chieftain in republics, and they came thick and fast to him, but his fine business talents vindicated the partiality of his countrymen, and he became as great in the council chamber as in the ranks of war. Carressed, adulated, rich and powerful, what more was necessary to make life happy? Yet why does he lean his head on his hand even while the eyes of beauty are gazing down on him, while music is filling the air, and the voice of flattery has scarcely ceased its whisper? Why does he shade his eyes and look out into the calm moonlight? In the camp, in the hall, in the saloons of fashion, evermore one pale cheek rose to his fancy—eyes into whose depths he could gaze down and find no guile were beaming upon him with true and undying love. Col. Thornton was a bachelor, and ladies had ceased to consider him a subject for speculation.

It was twilight at Venice. Grey mists were shrouding the marble palaces in sombre folds. The Gondolier's song was silent, and he lay lazily stretched along the steps to the palazzas, or rested upon his oar, for it was yet too early for the swarms of human creatures that live abroad at night. A lady sat in one of those upper balconies that overhang the canal. Her dark eyes were fixed on vacancy, and the shadows that played over her expressive features denoted deep passion. But soon her mood changed, the bitter and ireful expression ceased to curl her lip—tears began to flow—low and convulsive sobs shook her whole person, and she seemed abandoned to a perfect paroxysm of grief.

One by one the lights began to gleam upon the water, the front of the splendid palaces that reared their proud walls over the glassy pavements became illuminated; and music began to steal along the air. The sons and daughters of pleasure were in pursuit of their idol, and noise and gaiety succeeded the few tranquil minutes of twilight. The attendants of the lady came to summon her to the bath and the toilette, and in an hour all traces of sorrow were effaced from the features that had so lately writhed in agony. Rather above the ordinary stature, an imperial majesty of mien distinguished her from others, and but for the soft and gentle expression of her lustrous eyes one would have felt awed rather than pleased by her exquisite beauty. The ever changing expression of her countenance bewildered those who did not know the beautiful, gifted, more than half crazed improvisatrice, the Marquise Bellini.

The rooms were crowded as the fair improvisatrice paused timidly at the entrance, but it seemed that anxious eyes were watching her approach, for the Prince P——, the noblest in the throng, pressed eagerly forward to receive her, and as she slowly promenaded the apartments leaning on his arm, his features expressed the deep witchery of her power over him. At length she paused beneath the dazzling light shed from a magnificent chandelier in the centre of the room. Her face had become animated, the rays of light streamed down on her head and shoulders, revealing their matchless proportions, and the long shadowy tresses sparkling with gems, while her sable robes contrasted vividly with her white arms and brilliant complexion—a complexion too variable to be supposed the creation of art. The prince was bending forward in an attitude of supplication, and gently pressing her toward a temporary throne of cushions piled in the centre of the apartment. The guests left the tables of chance, and the promenade to crowd around them, and even the music had ceased so intent were they upon this new source of amusement. The marquise threw around one proud, triumphant glance, and permitted the prince to seat her, while he whispered some word of passionate entreaty in her ear as he sank at her feet in a recumbent posture on the cushions by which she ascended. A murmured, plaintive sound arose that thrilled into articulate expressions, and the improvisatrice in the pure and poetical Italian of her own clime, was giving one of those wild bursts of romance an American so little comprehends.

That night the prince had received as his guests some distinguished foreigners who were visiting the south of Europe, and among them the American Ambassador to Paris. He had seen at Rome one of those gifted women, but she was neither young nor beautiful, and the wondrous charm that fascinated his gaze on her radiant countenance, her rich crimson lips, her white pearly teeth, her snowy skin, and above all her lustrous eyes, so touching in their passionate darkness, was altogether new. He had marked her entrance, and the devoted regard the prince had continued to bestow on her, while conversing with an English lady, to whom he had been presented; and he had enquired of her who was the beautiful creature with whom he had appeared so enamored, and her reply was only calculated to excite instead of allaying his curiosity.

"The beautiful creature! yes! the Improvisatrice Marquise Bellini *is* beautiful that is certain—but her manner tells she is not beautiful always. See you not that she is old—and then

how large a hand!" The minister started at this remark.

"Oh! but madam, *that* appears her only personal defect, and to you, who are accustomed to see always such delicately moulded fingers," and he gallantly glanced at the shrivelled hands of the English woman, "it must be a glaring one."

"Oh! that is not her *only* defect, I assure you, they do say," and here she lowered her voice—"they do say she is half crazed. She is the richest widow in Venice, and were she not an Italian——"

"Are you sure she is an Italian?" and the ambassador's eyes followed the lovely marquise in that abstracted sort of gaze in which the memory of some object is mingling with the present.

"Quite sure, for Prince P—— himself told me she was a native of Italy, and he is good authority, for you see evidently he is her lover." The word lover sounded harsh in the minister's ears, and he too became absorbed in listening, for now arose the clear silvery tones of the improvisatrice as the wild imaginings of her brain found utterance, now describing the maiden and her lover in the first glow of reciprocated love, exchanging vows in the vine covered bowers of Thessaly. The soul-stirring appeals of patriotism arouse the youth from his delirium of joy—he hastens to gird on the sword—and the hands of the heroic maiden bind it to his side, having first secured his fidelity by a charm, won by pilgrimage and rich offerings from an old witch of Thessaly, the classic home of magic. The camp—the battle—the pursuit—the captured maiden, fearless of all but the loss of her lover, and seeking him on the battle-field with woman's constancy and devotion. His escape to the old caves of Thessaly, and her imprisonment in the Turk's seraglio. Her liberation after refusing to exchange the object of her love for the Imperial tiara, and her wondrous and perilous journey, now reposing beneath the bland skies of Greece, in the open fields, and then in the rude tent of the soldier, protected by the impassable purity of consecrated love. And now the maiden gains, after long toils, the first sight of her lover's home—she sees him entering the threshold—her weary limbs receive fresh impulse—soon the reward of her constancy will be won—she springs forward, she enters his dwelling—a young matron rocking a sleeping infant meets her glance. At that moment the improvisatrice bent forward, her eyes sparkling, her whole face rigid, and the gleaming of a dagger she held aloft as if personating the enraged murderer. She was in the act to wreak vengeance on her perfidious lover, when her eyes suddenly met those of the ambassador, who had

pressed forward as if under the power of some irresistible influence until he touched the cushions on which the prince reclined. In a moment her arm relaxed and dropped powerless by her side; her bright complexion faded to a cadaverous hue, and as the prince bore her from the crowd into the air her eyes were fixed in a long gaze upon the American. Her exit was attributed to the perfection of her art in acting, and the listeners drew a long breath and smiled as they applauded the exertion of her genius. That night came fantastic visions to the tortured brain of the minister. Some old memory of wrong identified him with the perfidious Thessalian when he slumbered, and when he awoke as tantalizing images rose before him as ever mocked the desolated heart. Hope, young and devoted, came before his fancy, he saw her in all the perfection of her unrivalled beauty and her devoted truth, he listened to the soft accents of caressing fondness she had poured into his young ear. How that ear had thirsted since for those fond tones. Then arose the brilliant vision of the improvisatrice in all the majesty of her beauty and her genius, and her long passionate gaze as the prince bore her away. Why were her eyes thus fastened on his with such a soul searching glance? He rose and walked his apartment, and his will by a strong effort dispelled the frenzied chimeras of his fancy. But his mood was stern, though calm, and he was tempted to doubt the means by which he had sought happiness in life.

The two succeeding days were given to visiting the palace of St. Mark, the old den of torture, where fiends in men's likeness appeared—the spires—the churches—the works of art—the bridge of sighs—but nowhere did he meet any one who named the Marquise Bellini, and some inexplicable feeling sealed his own lips from making the enquiry. No longer able to bear this oppression and indefinable emotion he entered a gondola, and desiring the gondolier to row slowly past the Bellini Palace, he wrapt himself in a cloak, and with a hope he scarcely dared own to himself he stood up to gaze at the latticed windows of one of the oldest, but most magnificent buildings in Venice. He had past in the twilight and was now returning slowly, his head raised to look up, when a slip of paper came fluttering from a casement, and a white hand drew back the blind that had for an instant unclosed. The gondolier caught it ere it touched the water and handed it with a smile to the American. With a burning cheek he read.

"If Henry Thornton desires an interview he will be received at the Bellini Palace."

Instantly desiring to be landed he ascended the

steps, and was admitted by a venerable looking domestic whose antique air was in keeping with the exterior of the palace. He silently ushered him through a long suite of rooms, and in the farthest that seemed to be furnished something between an oratory and a library, sat a woman on a low stool, whose black robes and long curling tresses so completely enveloped her whole person that Thornton paused lest he was mistaken in supposing it a living creature. The servant closed the door, and still she stirred not, if woman it was. Thornton turned as if meditating retreat, when she slowly raised the veil of clustering curls that had fallen over her recumbent face and looked up at him. The wax tapers that burned upon a shrine of the Virgin dimly lighted the apartment, and the paleness of the marquise gave a spiritual hue to her features as she gazed so mournfully up into Thornton's face, the tears slowly dropping from the long lashes upon her colorless cheek. Amazement for a minute robbed him of all power of utterance, but the next he lay at her feet, abandoned to the transporting assurance that Hope, his own Hope and the improvisatrice were one.

Pass we over the first hour of their interview in which Thornton, in the strong eloquence of that passion that had now burst to flame from the long smouldering ashes of concealment, gave utterance to all his hopes, his plans and his wishes, and in which Hope had explained to him the change that time had wrought—how she, a motherless maiden, had been induced to accept the offer of a lady going to Europe to take charge of her children. That in the character of governess she had seen the old Venetian noble at her protector's house. Interested by her story that the American lady had told him and by her extreme beauty, he had offered to wed her and give her a home and a fortune. His amiable temper, his benevolence and tenderness had won her gratitude, and with devoted fidelity she became his companion, his nurse, and his friend, and in return he had left all of his estates that were not legally the inheritance of his heir at law to her.

"Thus I am rich and of high rank, and still beautiful," concluded Hope with a faint smile, as she shook back the silken tresses from her white neck. At that moment the clock of St. Mark struck, and starting up she exclaimed, "I vowed but to indulge one hour in seeing, in hearing you. Henry Thornton the hour will expire in a few minutes. Listen, but do not interrupt me. I was very sinful when you left me abandoned to all the wretchedness of disappointed love—I swore bitterly to be avenged. My vow is recorded and cannot be recalled.



THE TRANSPOSITION.

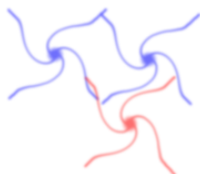
A SOUTHERN ROMANCE.

BY VIRGINIA SEPTMAN.

For this purpose have I lived—have I dragged on years of anguished regret, despising the fools that flattered, and fearing the good who approached me, knowing the evil passions that disappointment had engendered in my heart. I sought consolation in religion as taught in the creed of my New England forefathers, but it came not for sighs or prayer. I abjured it—I sought forgetfulness in the adulation of the noble and gifted, but it fled me—my guilty vow rose ever before me. Then I prostrated myself in the very abandonment of isolated misery at the footstool of the Catholic faith, and unbosomed myself of the burning thirst of vengeance that lay festering at my heart. I prayed for *this* hour, and it is granted me. We part to meet no more—my vow is fulfilled—wish you not in this hour that you had been born a peasant so that you had kept faith with me.”

In vain Col. Thornton implored her to save herself and him the misery of a life of separation; in vain he urged her to forgive his youthful error. Gazing on him as she clasped her hands, while drops of agony burst from his brow, with a cold smile she gently withdrew her hand and raising the drapery behind him passed from his presence.

In a month all Venice was flocking to see the beautiful Marquise Bellini take the veil. In consideration of her ill health and her riches the noviciate had been waived, and she was to become a nun of the order of our Lady Clare. By the rails of the altar stood a cloaked cavalier, accompanied by Prince P——, and when the long silken tresses were cut from her head he stretched forth his hand to receive them, and hastily leaving the church, was no more seen in Venice.



THE night was one of surpassing loveliness. Not a cloud was there to dim the radiance of the faintest star, and the silvery moon shed an uninterrupted stream of mellow light upon the quiet landscape. Every sound was at rest, save the soft murmurings of the dying wind, as it glided among the branches of the stately magnolia, and a rich fragrance, known only to the spring of this southern clime, filled the air. Here indeed might the gentle spirit bow down and worship at the shrine of Nature!

In silent admiration sat Honoria Darlington, gazing from her window upon the scene, and wondering probably at the infinite goodness of that all seeing One, who had thus blessed the land with so much loveliness.

“Hand me my guitar, Bella,” said she to the slave seated at her feet; she was instantly obeyed, and taking the instrument in her lap she ran her taper fingers gently over the strings. The sweet sounds circled confusedly around, and Honoria, leaning from the window, listened attentively as though to catch some expected answering note. She was not disappointed. A strain of soft music swept faintly from the garden below, and presently she caught the well known sound of her lover’s voice as he sang in a suppressed tone a few lines of his own composition. A deep blush mantled over her cheek, and withdrawing from the window, she cast a slight shawl around her form, and passing down the stairway went forth to meet him.

Long and enchantedly did they linger beneath the shrouded arbor. A tale of love was told the hundredth time, and for the hundredth time was it listened to with downcast eyes and crimsoned cheek. Again did they bewail a stern father’s decree which denied the consummation of their happiness, merely because the suitor could bring neither riches nor a high name to his bride. What cared *she* for riches or the world when her whole soul was wrapped up in a single being? Edward Mayfield was her “all in all,” and without him this beautiful earth would become a dreary wilderness indeed. With despair did she receive the command to renounce him forever and prepare to wed another, but Edward’s countenance beamed joyfully as she tearfully related the doom.

“Now, then, my Honoria,” said he, “you surely can lay aside all scruple. Let us fly this persecution without delay, and when we are happily made one we will defy earth to

separate us. Your father fails in affection to you, and would sacrifice your dearest wishes merely for base wealth! Will you then longer yield to a false sense of duty to one who thus carelessly disposes of his child's happiness?" The young man spoke vehemently.

"Edward," replied she, looking up confidently through her tears—"I feel indeed as though it were hard—very hard thus to sacrifice my every hope of earthly joy—but must I disobey my father?"

"None can blame you, dearest; have you not plead long and vainly ere you take this step? And look into the future, Honoria—fancy yourself the pale, care-worn, drooping, broken-hearted wife of an unloveable old man; when your father gazes upon you then will he not curse himself for thus blighting your youthful hopes? His anger at our flight will be but brief; all will be forgiven, and how delightful then will be our task—hand in hand—to lessen his cares and minister to his comforts during the down-hill of life!"

But we will not, reader, relate how Honoria still objected, and how Edward still urged—the argument was long and sweet; and while her nays were growing more faint and his appeals more urgent, the heedless moon had slid rapidly down the blue sky, and now threatened to withhold her light by dropping behind the distant mountains. The parting kiss was imprinted the twentieth time upon her forehead, and at last Edward succeeded in tearing himself from her, but his heart beat with a joyousness it had long been a stranger to as he mounted his horse and galloped away.

Honoria sought her chamber—but not now as formerly, to weep—for a heavenly hope beamed within her breast as she felt that the die was cast. Yes! her father *would* one day rejoice that she had obeyed the dictates of her own heart, and they would indeed—hand in hand—smooth the pillow of his declining days.

She slept—in a sweet dream fancy led her into the midst of a garden of roses. The pure air she had just breathed circled around, and the same moon smiled from her high place. "My Honoria," said a voice. She turned and gazed upon his face with unspeakable rapture. He led her among the clustering flowers, and whispered tones of love that fell like soft music upon her ear. They sought a murmuring brook and rambled by its side; bathing their feet in its limpid waters. Suddenly a stream of dazzling light poured upon them from above. Startled, she turned to grasp her lover's arm, but he was gone! In agony she strove to hide her face from the blazing torrent, and calling upon his name, awoke!

It was day, and the bright sun beamed full upon her through the open casement.

We must now return a little. When Honoria left the house and entered the garden to meet her lover, Bella, the hand-maid, passed her head out of the window and watched the receding form of her mistress with evident satisfaction until it had disappeared in the arbor, and then turned with alacrity to equip herself for a jaunt. This was but the work of a minute. Taking a large white handkerchief, she passed it several times around her head, and tucking the ends up beneath the folds, stood before the glass to regard the moonlight effect. She was pleased, and well she might be, for the head-dress became her much, having been arranged with an infinite degree of taste and skill, acquired by long practice. She next drew a small bundle from the closet, slung it on her arm, took another hasty glance from the window to see that the coast was clear, and quitted the room. As noiselessly as her mistress, she descended the stairway, crossed the hall, and reached the yard, whence, darting to the paling, she scaled it with ease, and was soon tripping gaily over the lawn to the spot where she knew her lover Hector was in waiting with his master's horse.

Hector had fastened the animal to a "swinging limb," and was now comfortably perched upon the upper rail of the worm fence which enclosed Mr. Darlington's domain, singing in a low tone his favorite song—"As I walked out by de light ob de moon"—when a rustling among the bushes startled him.

"Who dar?" demanded he, turning his head quickly in the direction. All was instantly still. "Who dar, I say? If I come down off dis rail arter you, I'll——" Hector was suddenly deprived of further power of speech on hearing a low, moaning sound issue from behind a large pine which stood most uncomfortably near his locality.

It ceased, and he strained his eyes with the hope of discovering the cause, but in vain. He then scrutinized the bushes with equal ill-success; though fancy conjured up for a moment a pair of fiery eyes beneath every one. He tried to recollect some animal of his acquaintance that cried in that manner, but after thinking over a long list he was about to give up the inquiry in despair and get away as fast as possible, when a happy idea struck him.

"Sho! notin 'tall but bee-hive. Git out, you darn little critters, I no 'feard!"

Chuckling at the thought of being frightened at the buzzing of bees, Hector was about to resume his tune when the sound was repeated, louder and clearer than before, and no longer resembling

the hum of bees, but more like the human voice disguised. Unfortunately the poor fellow just at this moment recollected having heard that *panthers* often imitated the cry of people to decoy them into their vicinity. Horror-struck at the thought, he turned his starting eye-balls again to the tree, and there, sure enough, crouching at its foot, was the perfect counterpart of the very beast he had heard described so often in frightful colors, but never saw. There were the broad stripes down its back, the white crown, the long glittering teeth, the large leaden eyes, the—but Hector could stay no longer. Sliding from the fence with astonishing agility, he burrowed into the bushes on the side opposite that occupied by the panther, and commenced scampering off as fast as possible on all-fours.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the animal.

Hector redoubled his speed and threw the sand up behind him to blind the creature's eyes, for he felt sure that it was coming.

"You darn fool, Hec! come back," said the panther. He stopped and listened, "Gorra!—panter know me?" thought he.

"Ha, ha, ha!" again laughed the panther.

Hector now began to suspect the truth.

"Who you?" said he, rising up boldly and looking toward the fence.

"Why me!—don't you know me, Bella? Bless 'um, man, how you make de dirt fly."

Hector, now fully apprized of the trick that had been played upon him, became re-assured and approached the fence.

"Save us, Bella!—how you *'fisticated* me!" said he, wiping the perspiration from his brow—"ain't you 'feard it'll 'fect my cons'tushum?"

"Why, how should I know you was *sech* a coward?" asked Bella, still laughing immoderately.

"Hush larfin at me, Bell—guess if you tout panter been guine comin ater you de dirt would fly too. You musn't larf no more."

"I will larf, Hec, as much as I please."

"You shan't larf."

"I will."

"Come, Bell, dat ain't 'riginal—you got dem *will's* from you young missus when she make fun wid mass Ed'ard, enty now? But I say, Bell, what bring you hea?"

"Why, you ongallant feller—I come out in de lone wood fer meet you, an' you talk dat away? I'll hab Jones' Sam if you no mind."

"Let Jones' Sam go to grass—you *couldn't* take to dat boy, Bell, he ain't half a man yet."

"Nor you, Hec! run from a woman, ha, ha."

"When he come 'guise like panter who would n't cut dirt? De sec no fer be trust no time, let

lone when dey come in *questinated* shape. But I say, Bell, what you fetch in dat bundle?"

"Some pone fer you, you good-fernatin!" With this expression of endearment, Bella opened the bundle, and taking out a large potatoe pone, placed it on a log before the gratified Hector. He lost no time in attacking it, and soon detached a piece and commenced eating.

"An' now, Bell," said he, speaking with a crammed mouth, and casting a sidelong glance at her, "spose we talk ober dat 'fair ob ours—eh?"

The young lady blushed deeply, and casting her eyes to the ground, appeared to be absorbed with contemplating the efforts made by Hector's great and second toes to grasp an acorn, seemingly without their owner's knowledge.

"Fine time dis, Bell, now dat de lubly queen ob night is shinin ober our innicent head," continued he sheepishly.

"Oh, Hec! how you talk," replied she in a low tone, and with apparent effort. The lover gave a silly laugh, and took an enormous bite of the pone. A somewhat disagreeable silence now ensued, during which the gentleman seemed wholly absorbed with eating, and the lady with brushing away the leaves with her shoe. At length she spoke, and in the same low tone.

"Missus say as how—as how—missus say as how—"

"Well—what um say as how, Bell?"

"She say as how—oh, Hec, I too shame fer tell."

"Sho! Bell—don't mind tell 'fore Hec."

"Den missus say as how—I too young fer marry yet, he, he, he!"

Again there was a silence. Hector was very busy, and Bella very uneasy. There was evidently something on her mind which she wished him to understand; but he was resolutely stupid. Again was she forced to speak first.

"Hec?"

"Bell!"

"What you tink 'bout Hec?"

"Nut'n tall, Bell."

"Tink young missus guine run'way wid you' Mass Ed'ard?"

"He, he, he!—tink *he* run'way with her if he kin."

Another pause.

"Hec?"

"Eh?"

"Spose we was fer run'way and git marry too, Hec—he, has he?"

Hector looked up at her for a moment in profound astonishment; then turning up the whites of his eyes he fell back on the log on which he had seated himself, and roared with laughter.

But, reader, this chapter is getting longer than we intended; we must, therefore, sorrowfully withhold the further parley of these lovers. Besides it would be hardly fair to expose entirely to the world the chit-chat of our humble friends after letting those of the arbor off so easily. We will, however, give the *matter*.

Bella, it seems, had taken it into her head that Hector should runaway with her to the parson's—*why* we cannot exactly say. To put him up to this bit of romance had she sought him on this lovely night. What part the *pone* had to play does not appear very clearly; probably one of persuasion. She found it very difficult to dispel the ridiculous light by which Hector regarded the idea. He could not very well understand why the comfortable kitchen wedding, which he had long looked forward to with complacency, should be thus put aside; particularly too as he knew that no one cared a straw when, where, or how they were married. But woman will have her way. The poor fellow was at last convinced against his better senses, and consented to act against his desires; judiciously concluding that a runaway match was better than no match at all, which Bella threatened. It was, therefore, agreed that he should be in waiting with his "cart and mule," not being able to command a better mode of conveyance, at the great gate at the foot of the avenue where Bella would meet him just at twelve o'clock the next night. They would then hie to parson Jack's cabin, have the knot tied in no time, and return ere suspicion was afloat. The matter was thus settled, and they parted: Hector sought again his rail, and Bella her mistress's room, where she was snoring most melodiously on her little pallet when Honoria returned.

We have said, or as good as said, that the sun peeped in at Honoria's window and dispelled her bright dream. Under other circumstances she would have been sorrowful at the intrusion; but now her heart beat joyfully, for she had to look but a little way into the future to see her dearest hopes realized.

Yes! ere another sun should mount the horizon Edward would be all her own; what cared she then for dreams? She arose, dressed herself and tripped lightly down to her flower garden, where she spent an hour as usual in watering, trimming and clipping flowers. After this was done she culled a quantity of the freshest and brightest, and carrying them to her father's library placed them in the vase on the centre-table, for he was very fond of flowers. She then ordered her pony, and mounting him, rode gaily around the adjoining grounds until breakfast time. She greeted the old gentleman at the table with a

smiling face, and poured out his coffee—for he would permit none other to wait upon him since he became a widower—with an alacrity that surprised him, for his child had of late been rather dull and melancholy.

"I am glad to see you so bright this morning, Honoria; I hope you will forget that young Mayfield, and smile upon your father as of old?" This was said in a tone of inquiry.

A rich blush shot over Honoria's features, and she smiled slightly but made no reply. She felt a pang at the thought of deceiving her dear father; but the after picture that Edward had drawn came as a relief to her mind.

"He will forgive us, and we will then *earn* his blessing," was her happy thought.

She passed the day with her usual pursuits, but the hours rolled away with most provoking slowness; and when at length tea time arrived it seemed as though an age had transpired since morning. She gazed for the hundredth time into the blue vault above. It had hitherto remained perfectly clear, but now a small, innocent looking cloud peered above the western horizon. In horror she watched the flying thing and thought, "what if it stormed?" but even as she thought the feathery cloud flew into a thousand pieces and dispersed. This occurrence would have relieved her fears had not a dozen other little feathery clouds come to the last one's funeral.

With a drooping spirit she sought her room alone, and seated herself at the window to watch the gathering clouds. Pile upon pile they arose in dark, threatening masses, and cast a gloomy shadow over the face of nature. Soon all was inky black, but still Honoria strained her eyes above, and strove to catch some faint indication of a break. Once she thought she saw a little star twinkling through the gloom, but it was fancy, for in an instant it was gone. In despair she heard the clock strike eight, nine and ten, and was about to yield herself up to a flood of tears when Bella entered the room.

"Want me, missus?"

"No, Bella," replied Honoria, striving to command her feelings, "I will not need you to-night; you may sleep in the kitchen if you wish."

The girl curtsied and withdrew. Once more she turned to gaze upon the blackness. Just at this moment a dazzling flash of lightning cast its red glare around, and was soon followed by the deep bellowing thunder. This cleared, but another sound struck upon Honoria's ear, it was the coming rain. More and more distinct it grew, until at last it came, and a torrent poured from the stirring clouds. She could contain her feelings no longer, but cast herself on the bed and burst into an agony of tears. She sobbed

for a while as if her heart would break, but the excitement of an anxious watching had exhausted her strength, and she soon fell unconsciously asleep.

We must now turn to our second heroine. Bella was also very much discontented by the unexpected state of things without, but her feelings on the subject were somewhat different from those of her mistress. Hector would come storm or no storm; and then she had a good cloak, and moreover a good stout pair of shoes, so that there was no difficulty on this head; but then how could she get out without being observed? Here was the difficulty. Her idea was that while Honoria and Edward held their usual long midnight meeting she could slip away, get married, and return unsuspected without difficulty; but a storm would most certainly prevent the lovers meeting, what, therefore, was to be done! She tasked her brain for some thought that might afford a good prospect. Desperation sharpened her wits, and it came at last—"I'll ask missus fer let me sleep in de kitchen to-night, 'cause why, I hab *souin* to do." Bella sought her mistress with a fluttering heart, for she feared that Honoria would hardly consent to be left alone on a night of such dreary promise—but what was her delight and surprise to hear her wish granted even before it was expressed.

The torrent which fell immediately after she quitted the room, was, it is true, something of a damper to her spirits, since it might get through her cloak to the tidy wedding dress which she intended to sport before good old Parson Jack; but she lived in the hope of at least a temporary cessation of the tempest, and she was not disappointed.

At half past eleven there was scarcely a sprinkle, and though it was still very dark and threatening, she cloaked and hooded herself, and set off joyously for the appointed rendezvous. She reached the gate, passed out, and took a seat at the foot of a large oak to await Hector's arrival. Sometime had elapsed—at least half an hour according to her calculation—when a distant sound broke upon her ear. She listened and heard distinctly the tramp of a horse and the rumbling of wheels. A vehicle approached, much too rapidly, however, for the capabilities of Hector's mule, and Bella shrank back against the tree until it should pass. But it did not pass. The horse was reined up exactly in front of the gate, and immediately after some person alighted. Bella's sight could penetrate but a little way into the gloom, but she saw enough to convince her that the heavy vehicle which loomed in the darkness was not Hector's cart, nor was the tall, restive animal Hector's mule. Supposing that some

weary traveller, lost and benighted in the forest, as was frequently the case, had come to seek hospitality and a shelter, she sprang instantly forward to open the gate.

"Dearest Honoria," said the gentleman, approaching as she came from her hiding-place—"I had hardly dared to look for you on such a night as this—so dark and dismal—thanks, love, for this promptness."

He would have caught her to his bosom, but Bella started back horrified. She recognized the voice of Hector's master.

"Nay, my only one," said Edward in a very gentle voice; pleased, no doubt, at her timidity, "do not shrink now that all is nearly accomplished—let us haste away, for even now I hear some one approaching—haste my own love!"

But the lady leaned speechless against the fence, and was in no plight for moving. Edward could delay no longer. Catching her up quickly, but tenderly in his arms, he imprinted a passionate kiss upon her hood, for the cheek was too well enshrouded to allow a nearer approach; and conveyed his precious burthen triumphantly into the carriage.

Poor Bella was too much frightened even to scream, and when she reached the seat she fell back probably in a swoon.

That our young hero was much surprised at Honoria's weight we cannot exactly affirm, if so he no doubt recollected that "appearances often deceive," and consequently thought no more about the matter. Certain it is, however, that the door was closed upon her with an emphasis which spoke much satisfaction, and mounting the box, he seized the reins and drove off at a furious rate.

As it was scarcely more than a mile to the village minister's residence, Edward accomplished the distance in a very few minutes. He dismounted, and throwing the check-rein over a convenient post, ran lightly up the steps and gave the bell a vigorous pull. After a moment a window was thrown up, and the reverend gentleman put out his head.

"Who's there?" demanded he.

"We're in waiting at last, sir," replied Edward.

"Ah, is it you, my young friend?—verily, I hardly expected you on such a night as this. But I will attend in a moment." He withdrew and the sash fell.

The lover in a transport of joy now flew to the carriage. The door was opened and the steps let down in a trice.

"Honoria?" said he with a soft voice, striving at the same time to catch a glimpse of her form amid the darkness within.

There was no answer.

"My own Honoria, be of good cheer; but a few moments and all will be over." The lovers voice trembled with delight, and he crept into the carriage.

Bella felt that all would indeed be soon over with her. She had recovered her senses sufficiently to understand thoroughly Edward's mistake; but too late to effect a rectification with any safety to herself. She could do nothing, therefore, but keep quiet and postpone the crisis as long as possible. After uttering innumerable protestations of undying love he lifted her gently from the seat, kissed the provoking hood all over and bore her from the carriage.

The poor girl could bear it no longer. Terror was now merged into desperation. Giving a vigorous bound the moment her feet touched the earth she eluded his grasp, and would undoubtedly have reached the wood ere he recovered from his surprise, had not an unlucky hook belonging to his cloak become entangled in the hood and held her fast. The effort unmasked her, and the mischievous moon just at this moment peeping from between the breaking clouds revealed her countenance. Edward started back and gazed upon her in speechless astonishment.

Bella's tongue now came to her assistance—she spoke loudly and fluently.

"Please goodness, Mass Ed'ard—hope I may die, Mass Ed'ard, if I wasn't jest guine fer open de gate fer let you pass, and—please goodness, mass—"

"Who are you?" demanded the lover peremptorily.

"Nobody, Mass Ed'ard—taint me, please goodness."

"Bella!"

"Yes, sir—I just been guine—"

"Silence!—how came you at the gate so late at night?"

"Please goodness, Mass Ed'ard, I jest been guine fer meet Hector, an' you come, an' I tort as how—"

"To meet Hector!—what had you to do with Hector?"

Bella here found herself forced to enter into an account of her scheme, and she gave it very fluently, though Edward strove to stop her when he beheld the minister coming out, followed by a servant bearing a light, attracted, no doubt, by the singular dispute.

The good man listened in amazement, and the servant tittered and held the light between his and Edward's eyes, that the latter might not read the expression of his countenance. With shame and mortification the lover turned his head away, and accidentally glancing up at the

building saw, or thought he saw, several night caps popping back from the windows.

This could be borne no longer. Explaining the case to the minister as well as he could by a few brief words, he ordered Bella to re-enter the carriage, and mounting the box, made his exit with a rapidity fully equal to that of his entree.

Once more on the lonely road, Edward checked his horse into a walk, and began reflecting on the mortifying occurrence, and wondered how he should dispose of his charge. The cool night breeze fanned the perspiration from his forehead and soothed his aching temples. His anger rapidly ebbed away, and as the ludicrousness of the scene struck upon him he would undoubtedly have laughed outright had not a keen mortification at the thought of the minister, the servant, the night caps, and also of Honoria, checked his rising mirth. But he grew calm and thoughtful.

"What was to be done? What *could* be done? Why did not Honoria come? The rain, the rain, the rain!—Oh, what a fool was he to expect her on such a night. Bella and Hector!—how ridiculously strange that the same hour should have been appointed! How the neighborhood will ring with this occurrence on the morrow. Were it wiser to bear all indifferently, or fly the country? What! and desert Honoria?—impossible." Such were Edward's enviable reflections, and with them must we leave him for the present, while we look after Honoria.

We left her asleep. The clock struck twelve and aroused her from her slumbers. Springing quickly from the bed she ran to the window. The rain had quite ceased, and the clouds were breaking up.

"He may come even yet, and I am not there to meet him!" thought she. Her resolutions were instantly taken. Equipping herself hastily against the weather, she passed noiselessly through the house, reached the avenue, and walking as rapidly as the muddy way would permit, soon arrived at the gate.

Hector was there, perched upon a rail as was his wont, but not now singing; for he was wrapt in contemplating his coming joys. He heard her approaching footsteps.

"Dar, Bella! now fer scare um a little!" thought he, and he crept quietly down and squatted himself behind the gate post.

"Boo!" exclaimed he, springing forward as she came within a few feet of his stand.

Honoria started back in affright.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Hector, "you larf at me, eh, fer being frighten' at panter, tort I'd fix you fer um—I say, gal, how come you jump so? what you tort twas, eh?"

"Why, Hector—what are you doing here?"

demanding she, surprised at recognizing the voice of Edward's man, as her lover was to come alone.

Hector rolled up his eyes and gazed at the form before him in mute astonishment. Though it was yet too dark to reveal her features, the voice satisfied him that he was not speaking to Bella. It required but little effort of memory, however, to lead him to the truth.

"Gorra!" exclaimed he, involuntarily gazing at her a moment longer—it was but for a moment. Turning quickly around he bounded to the fence and scrambled head-foremost over into the road. Honoria saw no more of him, but in a little while she heard his voice impatiently urging his lazy mule forward, and soon his cart clattered along the road homeward.

She listened until the sound died away in the distance, and wondered what could have brought him there. Concluding, however, that in passing with his cart he had mistaken her for Bella, and merely stopped to make love a little, she thought no more about the matter.

After waiting patiently for some time, and finding her lover did not appear, she turned away with a sorrowful heart, and was about to retrace her steps when the sound of wheels struck upon her ear. It was Edward's carriage. He had resolved to return and leave Bella at the gate.

"Edward?" said Honoria, recognizing her lover as he alighted.

The young man was instantly at her side. All thought of Bella and the parson vanished at once.

"Why so late, Honoria?" asked he tenderly, but reprovingly.

"Why so late!—was I not here before you?"

He gave a ghastly smile.

"Edward, how strangely you look!—are you ill?"

"No, dearest; but the fact is—I have met with a rather disagreeable adventure." He related all that had occurred; taking care, however, to get his face well in the shade. Honoria could not restrain her laughter; and Edward finally joined her in spite of himself. Bella hearing the glee without, concluded that there was now no danger, and, therefore, came forth with her mouth spread from ear to ear, and her white teeth glittering in the moonlight.

Honoria told her of poor Hector's flight, and proposed that she should get back into the carriage and drive after him; but Bella felt quite satisfied with her night's amusement, and thought that the best thing she could do would be to go home.

"But what *you* guine do, missus?" asked she.

Honoria looked at Edward, and Edward bit his nails. Again he asked himself "what *could* be

done?" To return to *that* minister was out of the question, and to part thus seemed still worse. At last, however, a bright idea occurred to him.

"Let us drive to the next parish, love—it is but ten miles, and we can reach it before day."

"But we cannot return before day, Edward," replied Honoria, innocently.

"Well, dearest, what of that?"

"What of that Edward!" exclaimed she in surprise, looking up at the same time into his countenance. The moon now shone brightly upon it, and revealed a meaning smile playing about his mouth. The eyes too sparkled peculiarly, and a faint tinge shot into his cheeks. Honoria dropped her head again and blushed deeply. She must have guessed his thoughts. Whether she would have consented to the proposition or not we cannot exactly say, for just at this moment a loud voice from beyond the fence startled them.

"Oh, ho! there, what's all this meeting about?"

"Edward! Edward! Oh, save me, Edward—it is my father! What shall I do?" whispered Honoria, tremblingly, as she ran to her lover and strove to hide her form behind his. It was indeed her father. The old gentleman, it seemed, had been seized with a violent fit of the gout shortly after Honoria left the house; and, as was his custom since her mother's death, sent for his daughter to nurse and soothe him. She could nowhere be found. The house was searched over and over again, but all in vain. The old man became frightened, and regardless of gout he arose and dressed himself, and at the head of a bevy of servants scoured the grounds in all directions.

It was during this search that Honoria's laughter caught his ear, and guided him to the gate. The moment Bella heard her master's voice she slipped into the wood and disappeared.

Edward's first impulse after recovering from his astonishment was to catch Honoria up into his arms, bear her to the carriage, and drive off in spite of her father; but when he beheld the array of servants he desisted. Folding his arms, therefore, he regarded the approaching party with as much indifference as he could assume.

"What's all this, young man?" asked Mr. Darlington, coming up to him, and evidently rising in anger as he recognized Edward, "what are *you* doing here, and with that lady too?"

The lover bit his lip, but made no reply—he had none to make. His countenance, however, wore the calmness of desperation.

"What does all this mean, sir, I ask?—this lady—this carriage, and at this time at night?" continued the old man, his rage rapidly increasing at receiving no reply.

"Have you lost your tongue, sir? You seemed to speak quite easily a moment ago!"

"I had thought speaking unnecessary, Mr. Darlington," replied Edward calmly—"such appearances as these generally explain themselves."

"Yes, sir, I understand you. You would *steal* away my daughter, eh? A lucky interference this of mine." He paused and regarded the calm countenance before him as if in doubt whether to inflict a personal chastisement on the intruder or not. At length he continued in a voice almost stifled with anger.

"Were it not for the part which this silly girl has played in this affair, I—I—I would *horse whip* you, sir, on the spot—you——"

"Dear father, do not speak thus——"

"Silence, madam!" said he sternly to the weeping girl, who had tremblingly approached him—"yes, sir, I—I would drub you soundly—you *scoundrel*!"

Edward started at the last word, and his eyes flashed fire. A maddening impulse would have thrown him upon his insulter had not Honoria stepped between them. The old man drew back.

"Get you instantly to the house, madam!" continued he—"we will talk this matter over to-morrow."

She looked up impatiently through her fast flowing tears into his face, but he reiterated the command even more harshly than before. The poor girl could but obey. Casting one glance of unutterable affection toward her lover she turned away.

"And now young man we leave you—but remember! if I catch you again on my premises, you will not get off so easily." With this threat the enraged father left the spot, and followed his daughter up the avenue, while the string of grave servants brought up the rear.

Edward stood motionless as a statue, gazing after their receding figures until they were lost in the distance. We cannot pretend to describe his feelings. They almost annihilated him. The blood trickling from his bruised lips showed that the stifled passion which burned within had found a little vent. Such language could hardly be endured even though it came from an *old* man, and *her* father. But he *had* endured it, and now turned with a faltering step, but a somewhat relieved spirit, to seek his carriage. During the solitary drive homeward amid bitter reflections on his disappointment, his mortification and the insult he had received, Edward formed his resolutions for the future.

The neighborhood *did* ring with the adventure ere another day had passed. The young belles watched the village street with eager curiosity to get a glimpse of the disappointed lover—but he

did not appear. Some of his young friends ventured to knock at his door, and several invitations to dine out were presented, but Edward was "not at home," and, therefore, could not attend. A second day passed without bringing him to light, and the village in consequence ran wild with curiosity. At length Miss Patsy Grant, an antiquated gossip, volunteered to settle the matter by a morning call and tender inquiry. She was politely received by Mrs. Mayfield, but was forced to retire unsatisfied.

Meantime things wore a sad aspect at Mr. Darlington's residence. The house was closed against visitors, and it was reported that the young lady was dangerously ill. This was too true. The excitement of the evening, her father's harsh treatment, and finally the news of Edward's disappearance, were shocks which her system could not bear, and she was thrown into a raging fever. Day and night the old man watched in sleepless agony beside the couch of his daughter. The physician had pronounced the case almost hopeless, and affirmed that nothing but the utmost care and attention could save her. These, however, she wanted not, for her father loved her with a devotion which would cause him to sacrifice anything for her safety; and independently of this, the circumstances of her illness wrung his soul with a remorse which drove all care of aught else besides her recovery away. During the paroxysms of the fever he listened, almost maddened, to the pathetic appeals and wild upbraidings of her delirium, and when at length the disease granted a short respite, and the exhausted girl sank into a sweet rest, he longed to whisper words of hope and promise into her ear, but the physician's express injunctions deterred him.

At length, however, toward the close of the third day a favorable change was announced. The delight of the father knew no bounds, and it was with great difficulty that they persuaded him to take the rest he so much needed.

From this time Honoria began slowly to recover, and ere a fortnight elapsed she was quite strong enough to take a short ride on her pony around the grounds; but Mr. Darlington marked with anxiety that the rose did not return to her cheek, the brilliancy to her eye, nor the wonted lightness to her step. A deep melancholy seemed settling around her. The few words she spoke were always words of sadness, and her smile was faint and mournful. Bitterly did the old man repent his harshness, and gladly would he *now* receive the lost one with open arms, but no news came of Edward.

Once when they were alone he drew his daughter near him and spoke of her lover for the first time since her illness.

"Honoriamy child," said he tenderly, "you never mention Edward Mayfield's name now."

She started, and a deadly paleness overspread her countenance.

"Can you forgive your old father," continued he, "for his rashness, Honoriam? He did not know of the strong affection he was violating."

"Forgive you, dearest father!" replied she, looking up with a sweet, but sad smile into his countenance, "I have nothing to forgive—rather should I seek forgiveness—having endeavored to deceive you."

"But, my child, I should not have opposed your wishes in this case without better reasons than—I confess—I could have produced; it was my fault that led you astray."

She was silent, and he continued.

"But it is not yet too late to retrieve, Honoriam, and your happiness shall be secured. I think I have a way to make those eyes sparkle as of old—eh, girl?"

She could not reply, her heart was too full, but her head fell upon his shoulder, and she wept.

That very day Mr. Darlington made his first visit to Mrs. Mayfield, and held a long conference with her, the result of which our readers may easily guess. Honoriam met him on his return, and though he kissed her and presented a small packet of letters without saying a word, she knew enough of the bright smile of satisfaction which beamed on his countenance to make her heart leap with strange joyousness. She sought her apartment and opened the packet eagerly. The envelope contained the following note:—

"My dear young lady. Enclosed I send you all the letters which I have received from my son since his departure. Why I send them your father will explain, unless you can guess. You will find much concerning you in them, and they will, at the same time, explain his actions. You are, no doubt, surprised at Edward's silence to yourself, but I can excuse him by saying that he refrained from writing only by my express command. I have much to say to you, but as I am unused to writing, and being, moreover, in some haste, I prefer saying no more now. Call to-morrow, or this afternoon if you can.

HANNAH MAYFIELD."

Honoriam was now at no loss to imagine the result of her father's visit, and blushing deeply at her own happy thoughts she turned to the letters. They were all written at Charleston, and were filled with a strange compound of tender and bitter feelings. She read them again and again, and gleaned enough to satisfy her that his heart was still all her own. One letter attracted her attention particularly, and from it we will make the following extract:—

"—I have strictly obeyed you, mother—but such a promise I find hard to keep. What can

Honoriam think of my sudden departure and utter silence? The heart that could desert her, on any account, were hardly worth cherishing. Is not your injunction cruel? I know you act not without an object—but will he ever come into such mild measures? Hardly; he would rather sacrifice his daughter than his pride. You say 'Honoriam has been very ill, but is now almost restored again.' Bless you, mother, for keeping me in ignorance of this until now. The thought of her writhing in agony while I remained tamely here would have tortured me into madness. You seem to think he must yet, and of necessity, repent his harshness to me; and you ask, 'can you forgive?' Yes—I could forgive all on one condition—but I have not the hope you express. She is recovering rapidly, and no doubt determines to forget one who treats her so coldly—why then should her father repent? Mother, I cannot bear this agony of suspense much longer. Release me from a promise made in a moment of anger and excitement, and permit me to return; the very consciousness of being near her will afford a great relief."

Tears streamed from Honoriam's eyes as she read this passage, but they were not tears of sorrow, though a feeling of tender pity called them forth. She felt a thrilling happiness, and when she sought her father the old man thanked heaven for the glowing blush and bright smile that lit her countenance, for he saw that all would be well again.

A day or two after the above occurrence Edward received three letters—one from his mother, one from Honoriam, and a third from Mr. Darlington. They had an immediate effect upon him, and he hurried back to the village joyfully.

Some few evenings after this the curiosity of the villagers was much excited by an unusual bustle and brilliancy about the mansion of Mr. Darlington. Several carriages belonging to the aristocrats of the neighborhood were seen driving up the avenue; and some one asserted that the minister's barouche was among the number.

It had been rumored that young Mayfield was "about," and now the wise ones began to suspect the truth. It was not until the next day, however, that they knew it; and then they also learned that the young couple had set out on a wedding tour.

It is with great pleasure that we are also enabled to add that Bella and Hector had a "kitchen wedding" on the same evening, and accompanied their young master and mistress to the Virginia Springs.

When the season was over the party returned, not, however, to the "old place," but to the "bridal estate," some fifty or a hundred miles distant.

WHO ARE HAPPY?

BY EMILY H. MAY.

"I wish I was like Charlotte Courtland," said Mary Stewart to her mother.

"And why, my dear?" replied her parent.

"Oh! because as Charlotte is rich she is always happy," and Mary looked rather disconsolately at some plain sewing she held in her hand. Her mother understood the look. But she answered mildly.

"Charlotte is rich, I know; but what reason have you for supposing she is happy?—that is, happier than other people."

"How can she help being happy, dear mamma?" said Mary with animation. "She has nothing to do, plenty of servants, a carriage, and—and you should see her dresses."

"But do these things make her happy?"

Mary looked up, as if surprised at her mother's pertinacious adherence to this question.

"I mean, my dear daughter," continued Mrs. Stewart, "do you know what happiness is? Does it consist in the possession of fine dresses and handsome coaches, or even in having nothing to do? You seem to think so now, but when you have lived as long as I have, your opinion will alter. I think I can show you even now your error. Do you remember when Charlotte Courtland was here the other day? When you and your sister Agnes went into the next room together, with your arms around each others waists, she sighed and said she wished she had a sister, and added, while her eyes filled with tears, that she was the most unhappy person in the world, for there were none to love her. She is an orphan, poor thing! and I doubt not that there was some truth in what she spoke."

"Yes, but mamma," said Mary, after a pause, "with all that, Charlotte never has a wish that she cannot gratify. Now, I often hear you and pa talking of buying things you say you want, and sometimes, you know, they can't be got because pa says he is too poor. There's the new carpet for the parlor we were to have had this spring, but which we will not get till next year."

"That is the truth, Mary," replied her mother, "we, who are not rich, have sometimes to deny ourselves. But how long do such crosses last? The next day I had quite dismissed all regret from my mind, and you, who seemed so anxious about it, were singing over the house as if nothing had happened. A new carpet would have made our parlor look much nicer, but it was not necessary to our comfort; and so the want of it has not caused either of us a single day's unhappiness. There was an hour's regret and that was all."

"But then, dear mamma, if I was rich you should have a carriage, and every fine day like this should ride out in the country, of which you are so fond."

"I question, my dear, whether you or I would find a carriage such a luxury after all. Your grandfather was wealthy, and before my marriage I always had a coach at my command, but, like Charlotte Courtland now, I rarely used it; for whatever is an every day thing with us, we value little."

"Oh! mamma," exclaimed Mary, "a coach become ordinary! Never, I am sure."

"Let us see how the case stands, my child. Do you remember the washerwoman who was here last week, and how she wished she was rich so that she might live without hard labor. Now to her your situation, with nothing but a little sewing to do, is as enviable as that of Charlotte seems to you. Why, the absence of the necessity for constant and laborious toil is just as much a luxury, in the eyes of the washerwoman, as the possession of a carriage is in your estimation. And yet you are as insensible to the value of this blessing as Charlotte is indifferent to her coach. You are both so accustomed to your several comforts that you never think how grateful you ought to be for them, when either of you would repine after what you do not possess. So, too, with respect to that inestimable blessing, a sister. You never, or rarely consider how thankful you ought to be for it, because with you the pleasure derived from sisterly sympathy is an every day affair; but once deprive you of one, and, my dear, you would pine for it far more than for a carriage, or for all the splendors that wealth could bestow."

"They are truly happy, Mary, who content themselves with their situation in life, whatever that may be, and waste no vain regrets on what is unattainable. If the luxuries of the rich tempt us to covet their possessions, we should recollect that wealth brings with it anxiety, that nearly every class has one above it to envy, and that there is just as much discontent consequently among the rich as among those who have but a competency. There is Mr. Walters, the wealthy dry-good man; his family are endeavoring to force their way into the circle of Mr. Jones, the rich lawyer; and they say that the Misses Jones are just as anxious to mingle with what are called the old aristocracy; while these latter, in turn, are unhappy because they cannot have titles here as in England. Thus all, so long as they look only on what they have not, are unhappy."

"The true way, when we feel discontented with our lot, is to consider the case of those who are worse off than ourselves. How many

are there to-day, in this great city, who know not where the food of to-morrow is to come from; and who can tell but we may ourselves, some day, have to take part in their hard lot? Of all the inhabitants here, not half fill a station in life as comfortable as ours; for we have sufficient for the comforts and not a few of the luxuries of life. And recollect, too, what you read of France the other day. There are four paupers to every rich man in that unhappy country. Besides, we have had no sickness for years in our family—a great, an inestimable blessing. I am sure, my dear, in the possession of your father and you I am, and ought to be the happiest of women."

"And so am I, dear mamma," said Mary, throwing herself into her mother's arms, "you have convinced me, and I ought to be ashamed of my wicked repinings."



WAS SIDNEY RIGHT TO BE JEALOUS?

BY W. P. HARRIS, M. D.

A SHORT time after leaving college, feeling disposed to take a trip of pleasure, I determined to make a journey of two or three days, and spend a week with an old classmate, who resided in the little village of A—. Although our homes were far apart we had met in early youth at a classical school. Necessarily kept much together by our studies we had gradually blended our habits and tastes to harmonize, and by degrees almost entirely separated ourselves from the rest of our schoolmates.

My friend and companion, Sidney Baskerville, was far from being the proud, unsociable person he was generally considered. His mind was quick and even brilliant, his temper mild but excitable, and although sensitive and reserved among casual acquaintances, no one was more free and confiding, generous and faithful, when he had discovered a congenial spirit deemed worthy of his confidence. Thrown thus constantly and closely together and dependent almost exclusively on each other for enjoyment in happiness, or sympathy in sorrow, we soon became the sole trusted partners of the others most secret thoughts. Determined not to be separated on leaving the school we had entered, we matriculated in the same college and continued together the studies we had pursued with such mutual satisfaction. Two years thus spent bound us more firmly together, and when at length the time came for us to part and each enter separately on the busy scenes of life, we made solemn vows to preserve a knowledge of the progress of each through the world by visits, in succession, as it might be practicable.

Sidney was well favored to ride safely if not triumphantly on the boisterous waters of life. He had a good person and pleasing countenance; his mind was well disciplined and liberally stored with useful learning; and he possessed a fortune, although not large, sufficient to allow him full time to gain reputation and profit after the usual long and tedious apprenticeship of the law.

During our intimacy I had learned much of his private history. He was an orphan, and, as most young men are, a lover, and had long confided to me an engagement between himself and the beautiful daughter of his guardian. They had been plighted when he was in his fifteenth, and she only in her thirteenth year. Often in our moonlight walks he had discoursed with the usual loquacity, and, as I thought, exaggeration of a lover, on her beauties and accomplishments. Well satisfied that no changes could shake the

constancy of his own heart, he placed the same implicit confidence in her attachment, and was always the first to condemn the lines of Scott as a slander, in which he compares the constancy of the gentler sex to the shade of an Aspen leaf. Whether the romantic descriptions he had given of her beauty were true, and whether or not time had made an unfavorable change on the love of his betrothed I expected to solve by my visit. Of the latter I began to have some fears, as during the last few months he had become a very negligent correspondent, and I had observed an unusual sadness in his letters which caused me to suspect that everything had not gone on as happily as his sanguine hopes had anticipated. Such apprehensions about the welfare of my friend induced me to mount my horse for a journey, on a disagreeable day at that season of the year when the last snows of winter are wafted about by the winds of March. However, after two days journey, I arrived safely and was welcomed with his accustomed cordiality, by Baskerville at the hotel of A—, whither he had removed to practice law.

We were soon comfortably seated in a neat office he occupied, situated on the Court Green, and although the snow pattered against the casement, and a cold and whistling March wind roared through the trees around, the comforts of blazing hearth and the joy of meeting, after a longer absence than had separated us for the preceding five years, made us as insensible to the tempest as if it had been an April shower. Hour after hour we travelled over school and college scenes, now calling to mind passages of our favorite authors on which we had delighted to dwell, or praising the beauties of a theorem—then discussing the various tenets of philosophers which had been subjects of innumerable disputations in days of yore—then came inquiries and comments on the characters and destinies of many an old college friend—with regrets and apprehensions that so few of us would ever again be thrown together on the shifting scenes of life—and then came the treasured remembrance of the paternal kindness and admiration of the talents of those professors who had toiled with, and guided us through the intricate but beautiful mazes of science—and lastly, our parting with them, and each other brought us to that boundary of life up to which we had travelled happily together, and on stepping over which we were to separate like the diverging rays of the sun, each to find some clod of earth on which to rear a flower or a thorn.

Oh! the past! thou all-powerful and inexorable monarch from whose judgment there is no appeal, from whose lion grasp no escape. How

is it that in ages past when altars rose and victims bled to every stone and every star; when every real or imaginary object was made a God, that no sacrifice was offered, no incense smoked to propitiate thy power?—Was it because thy judgments are irrevocable, and thy hold unrelaxed save by the touch of decay, which consigns thy deeds to "cold obstruction's apathy." The present may be improved, the future guarded against, but the past is all thine own: from which it is impossible to wrench the sweetest pleasure or the bitterest sorrow. How few of us can look back on thy ebbing stream without a sigh for some fault committed or opportunity neglected, and not wish to float again on the bright and tiny ripples of youth before we launch forth on the boundless waves of Eternity. Yet what is past is gone forever, and though words and deeds stand forth in dazzling colors on memory's faithful page, so must they abide to the end of Time, and although we may long retain them in our mind, yet each circling of the monarch's wand causes them to grow fainter and fainter until finally the clipped or worn out thread of life withdraws even the outlines from our gaze.

I had now become quite impatient to learn something of my friend's present prospects, or rather of his "affaire de cœur" as that was most likely to be the principal subject on his mind. Although quite gay and cheerful when we discussed the various events of our past lives, I observed a melancholy gloom on his features which appeared more marked than usual, and I had several times remarked a flush of anger, and a sarcastic curl of the lip when mention was made of some fair acquaintance of the gentler sex. He had made no allusion to the lady of whom, when we were before together, he so much delighted to speak, but as our confidence had heretofore been unlimited I thought I might venture a hint by way of directing his thoughts to the subject.

"Well, Sidney," I remarked after a pause in our conversation, "how have your matrimonial schemes progressed which formerly rendered you so impatient of your college term, as being the only barrier to perfect happiness."

"They have been dashed to atoms," he replied in a tone of deep bitterness, and rising from his seat strode rapidly to and fro across the room, "and a fool have I been to trust my happiness to a woman's constancy."

"I am sorry," I added, "that you have cause to judge them so harshly, and had hoped to find that you were about to realize your former bright anticipations—but perhaps you need not yet despair as you know the adage, 'the course of true love never did run smooth.'" He walked on in

silence for a few moments apparently endeavoring to soothe the heart-rending associations which my remark had called forth, then spoke in a calmer tone—

"No, indeed! I am far from realizing what I then considered the brightest vision of happiness I had ever beheld—and alas! awoke to find it but a dream. My heart was then warm, doting, confiding—I could not doubt one whose beauty, gentleness, and innocence marked her above all others as a model of such truth and loveliness as angels might not blush to wear—I had treasured her image in the deepest recess of my heart, and for years she had been my only earthly idol—on whose shrine I had offered up the dearest and most hallowed victim—a disinterested and devoted love. But time and circumstances have lifted that seeming veil of purity and proved that those delusive beauties formed but a 'gilded halo hovering round decay.' To find such fickleness of heart and disregard of plighted faith in a being of such celestial mould is enough to stagger the creed of the wildest advocate of human perfectibility—alas! we live in a golden age, but not that of which old Ovid speaks when truth, love, confidence, honor composed the current coin on which happiness was stamped. This might be characterized as a Carthaginian era in which 'punic faith' and punie virtue are bartered for punie gold. But when I permit my thoughts to dwell on this subject my passion guides my reason—so let us to the facts. I hurried home as soon as I could do so with credit, eager to consummate an engagement which had cheered and consoled me during my necessary absence: but imagine, for I cannot describe it to you, my grief and mortification to hear, on reaching the neighborhood, that she was receiving the addresses, and thought to be engaged to a young gentleman who had recently made his appearance in the village of A—. In every company I heard their names coupled together, with a long eulogium on his immense fortune, handsome appearance, gracious manners, together with a train of moral and social qualities in all the exaggerated colors that language can invent to pay court to wealth. Mr. Charles Vernon had been received with marked distinction by everybody in the village. Daily invitations to dinners, tea-parties, and pleasure excursions were handed him, and at each he appeared as the honored guest. Several weeks passed in this way before Mr. Vernon showed any decided preference for either of the village belles: it might have been from a desire to exercise caution and deliberation in selecting a partner for his bosom, or perhaps well satisfied with the gracious reception he met with from all, and conscious that it depended somewhat on

the uncertainty of his *intentions*, he was rather reluctant to exchange that for the affection of *one*. He was modest, unassuming and courteous to all; and although he generally paid *particular* attention to one at a dinner or party, he was sure to select another on the following day: thus after raising and blasting in turn the hopes of many, he at length confined his attentions exclusively to Agnes Lindsay, and for the preceding two or three weeks had been her constant attendant. Such was the report I received from a friend immediately on my return from college.

"I determined to repair immediately to the house of her father, a few miles from this place, and learn from her whether or not I should still consider myself in the position of an affianced lover. It was a pleasant evening, although the latter part of November, that I dismounted and rang the bell at the door of my guardian. A servant answered to the summons, from whom I learned that Mr. Lindsay and his lady had rode out, and that Miss Agnes was in the garden with Mr. Vernon. Concealing my vexation as well as I could at this intelligence, for I was not in the most amiable mood before, I remarked that I would wait for them in the drawing-room. Having resided with my guardian during my college vacations, and being looked on as a member of the family, the servant withdrew without further ceremony. Walking to a back door of the drawing-room I perceived the two coming up the walk arm in arm. Wishing our first interview to be private, and hoping that Vernon would leave immediately after reaching the house, I turned into a small room adjoining the parlor used as a library, and took up a volume to occupy the time. They soon entered the drawing-room and approached a table near the door of the library, on which stood a flower vase, for the purpose, I presume, of placing in it some flowers or evergreens they held in their hands. Although very near to the table at which they stood, my position was such as to screen me from their view, and I was thus unavoidably a listener to a part of their conversation.

"I learn that Mr. Baskerville is daily expected," said the voice of the gentleman, "and if old reports be true he will monopolize Miss Agnes' company and smiles."

"Pshaw!" replied the lady, "I had thought those idle reports had died away years ago—I have always looked on Sidney as a brother, and I presume they originated from the circumstance of his living here, and because we were seen so often together. I can assure you his presence will not change my conduct to others."

"I thank you heartily for that assertion," said the gentleman in a very significant tone, "it has

relieved me of apprehensions which have heretofore caused me great uneasiness.'

"The volume I had taken up happened to be Lord Byron's poems, and by a strange fatuity at that moment when my feelings were wrought to the highest point of jealous and infuriated passion, my eye fell on the line,

'Woman thy vows we traced in sand.'

The coincidence between my own feelings and the words of the author thus accidentally opened to me, appeared both as a warning and a proof, and stung to madness by the two I seized my hat and left the room, unperceived, by another door. In the passage I met the favorite old house servant, James, whose face expressed wonder and surprise at my hasty leave, but not heeding his assertions, how grieved master and mistress and Miss Agnes would be, I told him only to say that 'calling in a hurry and finding all the family out I would return the next evening,' and hastily mounting my horse I galloped back to the hotel, determined to return the next evening, and if I found her heart changed toward me as I had too much reason to suspect, that it should be our last interview.

"The next evening, after the lapse of twenty-four hours, during which time my feelings may be more easily imagined than described, I again dismounted at the house of Mr. Lindsay. James answered to the call, and to my inquiry whether Miss Lindsay was at home, replied in a hesitating, stammering voice (very different from his usual manner) that Miss Agnes had gone out in company with Miss Dupuy and Mr. Vernon. I made no other inquiry, but remounting my horse did not draw the rein until I reached a small farm of my own about twenty miles distant. There I spent the next two months in sullenness and perfect seclusion. At the end of that time my love for solitude and my ill humor having somewhat worn off, I determined to carry into effect my previous intentions of settling in this village to practice my profession, and I immediately established myself in my present quarters. Still hearing nothing authentic concerning an engagement between Miss Lindsay and Mr. Vernon, I began to think, on more mature reflection, that I had acted rather too harshly. Yet although Mr. Lindsay had repeatedly asked me to call again, I resolved that our first meeting should appear accidental and on some public occasion, knowing that a party would be given in a few days, to which both of us had received cards, and that I would then give her an opportunity, if she desired an explanation, and it would be after a manner more agreeable to my own pride.

"The evening of the party I entered the drawing-room more disposed to bring about a reconciliation than I had been for the preceding two months, but it unfortunately happened that when I first beheld Agnes she was promenading the room with Vernon, and to all appearances delighted with her partner. The words which I had last heard her utter flashed across my mind, the close and suspicious attentions of Vernon gave me additional cause to be jealous, and in a moment pride and anger banished every feeling of love from my bosom. I would gladly have retreated from the room without addressing her, but at that moment our eyes met, and I could not turn from her smile of recognition. I advanced and paid my respects in a polite, but cold and formal manner; she at first appeared surprised and confused, but quickly regaining her self-possession, returned my salutation with a distant curtsy, and immediately addressed herself to another. From time to time I heard remarks of different members of the company, some asserting that she and Vernon were certainly engaged, others doubting whether he had addressed her, but all agreeing that his attentions were well received, and that sooner or later it would be a match. Such observations had a tendency to exasperate my feelings. I was just preparing to leave the place when I was accidentally thrown by the side of Miss Lindsay in a retired part of the room. At first our conversation was restricted to general and common place subjects, neither appeared willing to commence a subject on which it was evident to both of us that a quarrel was inevitable, and neither willing to make a concession; at length to an inquiry concerning the delicate health of her mother, she replied—

"That she presumed it was rather prompted by politeness than sincerity as my not having paid her father a visit, left no other solution than that I felt no interest in their welfare.'

"I think it is time to forget,' I replied, 'when I find that I have not only been forgotten, but that another has been admitted to that position *en famille* which I once flattered myself that I held.'

"Whether it be true or not you appear to have come to the conclusion without troubling yourself much to enquire,' she quickly said.

"It did not require a very strict investigation,' I retorted, 'as every person in the room believes you engaged to Mr. Vernon, and your conduct certainly justifies such a conclusion.'

"Which conclusion has been hastily and uncharitably drawn, and is without a shadow of truth. But I remember that I have not released you from an engagement which your conduct

convincing me is burdensome, and I can do so without first having supplied its place with another.'

"While speaking she drew from her finger a plain gold ring which I had placed on it five years before: as she did so I observed a tear steal down from her soft and downcast blue eye, and felt a slight tremor of her fair, delicate hand as she placed the ring in my own. Oh! what a sensation of loneliness and despair chills the heart when we receive back that little thread of gold linked with the sweet and happy associations of the first moments of plighted love? How it reminds us of the sacred vow—the bright anticipations of future happiness—and the all-confiding trust placed in the faith of one we love? And then to come back to prove those vows were false—those hopes of bliss but delusive dreams—and the heart cheated of its confidence, left to doubt and disbelief forever after.

"The feeling she displayed in spite of every effort to conceal it, and the denial of an engagement, the suspicion of which had been the chief cause of my rudeness, had nearly subdued my resentment, and I was fast changing the ground of an injured for that of a supplicating lover, when my evil genius in the person of Mr. Charles Vernon came up to inform Miss Lindsay that her party were waiting and he would hand her to her carriage.

"Such was our last interview, since which I have tried by resolution, offended pride, and a sense of misplaced affection to bury the past in oblivion, but in calmer moments of reflection I feel too truly that in that Lethe I cast every hope of future happiness, for I can never again have sufficient confidence in another to form the basis of a pure and disinterested love."

"And what, may I enquire, do you intend to do—enter the list again, or suffer a rival to bear off the prize while you are hesitating whether you will yield to love or pride?"

"My determination is to wait until Vernon has addressed her. If she discards him I shall then have no doubt in regard to her attachment, but if I make any advances at present, the old report that we are betrothed may induce him to break off, as I understand he is extremely cautious; and if such should be the case I could not be perfectly satisfied in regard to her past conduct—nor will the world; so that justice to herself requires that she should have an opportunity to clear it.

"I know full well that neglect on one part and a proffer of wealth on the other are powerful agents to work upon a woman's heart, but I know also that Agnes Lindsay has good sense and firmness of character sufficient to prevent her from adopting a precipitate course which might ruin

her future happiness merely to gratify a momentary revenge, supposing that she still loves me; and if she does not why I shall save myself the mortification of an unsuccessful effort—your visit is very opportune. Mr. Thornton gives a large party to-morrow evening; and I have a presentiment that my fate will be decided at that time. If Vernon has not already offered his hand I am very certain that he will at this party, as I learn he intends leaving our village the next day. You will no doubt receive an invitation, and I wish you to learn, if possible, anything which may transpire concerning them: inquiries made with that object by me would be instantly suspected; and I do not wish any one else to be aware of the interest I feel in the matter."

A card of invitation reached me in due time, and in company with Baskerville, who was to be my patron, at a *very fashionable* hour we entered the brilliant rooms of Mr. Thornton. A large company had assembled, comprising all the beauty and fashion of the village and neighboring country, and rarely had it been my good fortune to observe more loveliness, grace and elegance in any one collection. My anxiety to see the lovely being who had so long enthralled the noble heart of my friend was soon gratified: following his eyes with my own—for I knew his would be directed in search of *her* who was more to him than all the rest—I soon discovered they were bent with keen, but fitful glances on a lady who was leaning forward an absorbed and attentive listener to the sweet voice and delightful music of an exquisite performer on the piano.

The silent and unbroken attention of the company gave me a fine opportunity to observe her very minutely. Her stature was tall and commanding, and her position at once careless and graceful. One hand rested lightly on the instrument with her tapering fingers, while the other was unconsciously entangling itself in the long, jet black locks of the performer, with which the curls of her own golden ringlets mingled in strong and beautiful contrast. So wrapt was she in the music that every note marked its effect in her beautiful and expressive countenance. At one moment as the singer's tones rose in full, rich strains, her soft blue eyes sparkled with the intense feeling and admiration which fine blue eyes so well express; and then as the notes died away in a soft, sentimental cadence, they looked like "violets dropping dew." So soft and dove-like were her eyes, and so sweet and gentle the expression of her small, nicely chiseled mouth that it was hard to believe she could be cruel even to the universal dupe of her sex—a lover.

The music ceased, and I turned my eyes immediately on the lady whose sweet voice and

well-taught hand had sent forth such melodious notes, anxious to discover whether my own imagination had sketched an ideal from the characteristics of her song which would bear any resemblance to her real appearance. Nor was I deceived in beholding a face so beautiful—and stamped with the softness, delicacy and timidity so eloquently portrayed in her music. She rose from her seat with exceeding modesty and grace and sought a retired part of the room, her cheek suffused with a blush—a beautiful blending of the rose and lily—and her snow white lids veiling with their “jetty fringe” the softest black eyes I had ever beheld—so diffidently and becomingly did she receive the universal applause which closed the finale of her song. An introduction to Miss Ashley (for such was her name) soon convinced me that the culture of her mind and heart had not been neglected for the sake of embellishing a person so exquisitely beautiful: the one had been stored with useful and ornamental learning, and the innate purity of the other well trained with moral precepts, as no tinsel ornament about her person displayed a taste for show, so likewise was her mind free from frivolous sentimentalism, and her heart from coquetry and deception. So modest and reserved was she naturally that it required some time to lay aside the embarrassment of a first acquaintance, and the uncertainty whether her own rigid principles of right and wrong so ultra to fashionable ethics, would coincide with the opinions of a stranger, required delicate and pressing encouragement to draw them from their unpolluted fount. Hour after hour I sat contriving some new question or varied topic of conversation, to sound the correctness of her taste and the firmness of the pedestal on which she had based the fabric of her morality—and each word—each sentiment added a new link to strengthen the chain which bound together the beautiful and harmonious whole.

“Oh! Ellen,” exclaimed a young lady as she seated herself by Miss Ashley, “I have just heard a most interesting conversation. I had taken my seat at the window opening into the portico, when I heard the voices of Agnes and Mr. Vernon, and as I soon discovered they were discoursing on *la belle passion*, I thought a little eaves-dropping would be excusable.”

“Oh, fie, fie! Lucy, how could you listen?” exclaimed Miss Ashley.

“As I thought—I am to get a lecture for being so obliging—why nobody but you, Ellen, with your straight-laced notions of propriety and conscientious scruples could resist hearing a *declaration* which every one has been dying of curiosity to learn something about,” continued Miss Lucy

with great glee, “and now what do you think is the result?”

“Indeed I cannot say, unless you will allow me to guess twice,” said Miss Ashley.

“Oh! just like you, Miss Prudence, no wonder you are never wrong, since you never give an opinion unless you know the whole matter, so I must tell you. Well, we have all been disappointed, for I admit I never was more certain of anything in my life, but to all his hard pleading she gave a decisive no—no. I did not think Agnes was such a block-head, and with so little *ambition*—only see what a *fortune* she has lost. I am sure it will not be many days before she regrets her course. I wonder whom, Mr. Vernon will—”

Leaving Miss Lucy to finish her comments on Miss Lindsay's conduct, I hastened to whisper the intelligence to Sidney.

Not to keep you waiting, fair reader, to hear the denouement at second hand, imagine yourself stationed at the same window from which Miss Lucy has just heard the tragedy, and if you will lend an attentive ear (for love generally speaks in whispers) you may, perhaps, catch some words of the after-piece: and if scrupulous about the propriety of your position console yourself by saying that you have taken it merely to observe the scenery without. For that alone is worth your attention, as on this evening it exhibits one of “dame nature's freaks.” It is bright, balmy, and, strange to say, a calm evening in March. The moon, riding high in the heaven, displays her full, round disc as bright and soft as if she smiled on the harvest field. Observe now at the casement, gazing up at the bright sky, her thoughtful brow resting on and shaded by her hand, Miss Agnes Lindsay—and whose step does she hear?—see, he is approaching—and now Sidney Baskerville takes a seat at her side.

“Miss Lindsay,” said Baskerville, as he seated himself—“why do you appear at this moment so melancholy? Once it was unusual to see a shade on your brow. Let me be a partner in your present speculations.”

“They would but render you less fit to mingle in companionship with the gay company you have just left, as they were not anticipations of never-dying pleasure,” said Miss Lindsay, “since,” she continued, “I was drawing a comparison of similitude between these sudden changes of the season and the vicissitudes of human happiness: this evening is soft and genial as the month of June—the last was like December, and perhaps the next may be equally unpleasant.”

“Miss Lindsay is the last person,” he replied, “from whom I would have expected to hear such ominous reflections. When we parted a few years



ago your life had been *apparently* unclouded: and now your *future prospects* are envied by all your female acquaintances; and I cannot *now* take the liberty," he added, making it half a question, "of inquiring what hidden cares lie beneath the visible surface."

"Alas! how often is the world deceived by flitious smiles, I have a far stronger claim on their pity," said Agnes in a sad and soliloquizing tone, without at all heeding the latter part of his remark.

"Ah! Agnes," said Sidney, "to see you witness a day of sorrow has made me regard with more reverence a retributive Providence: that one who has held the drugged cup to another should at last come to taste of its bitterness—I say it not in the spirit of revenge, for although you filled mine to the brim, so sacred is your happiness to me as the object of my first and long cherished love, I would forget how cruelly you repaid my devotion, and do all that friendship and sympathy can, to aid in rendering yours as bright and sparkling as ever. Come let me see you smile again. I sought you to communicate some pleasant intelligence for which I expect your congratulations, and to comply with a promise we mutually made several years ago."

"What promise?" said Agnes, with some embarrassment, "I do not remember."

"Do you not remember?" replied Sidney, "that we promised to tell the other when either became engaged to be married?"

"And to whom?" said she quickly.

"To Miss Ellen Ashley," said Sidney as he gazed anxiously in her face, which already pale, became slightly flushed, as with a powerful effort to appear unconcerned, then immediately grew deadly pale: and but for his timely support she would have fallen from her seat.

"She has fainted," he exclaimed, then chafing her temples as he whispered, "Agnes, dear, beautiful Agnes, forgive me, I did but jest. To no other have I ever given my heart, and to thee it is as true and devoted as ever. Say, dear Agnes, will you love me? Will you be mine?"

She spoke not, and as he bent forward to watch the motion of her lips, she smiled and her head *still* rested on his bosom.

Sometime after when he complained of her leaving home when she expected his visit, she said the servant neglected to deliver his message until the day after. And when reminded of her conversation with Vernon in the drawing-room, laughingly replied, "did you ever know a lady acknowledge an engagement?"

Now, gentle reader, (for lady I take you to be) the facts are before you—then answer me the question—"Was Sidney right to be jealous?"

THE WONDER OF THE LANE.

BY GRACE MANNERS.

WE have all heard of the "Wonders of the Lane," and few who have read the celebrated corn law rhymers' sweet and simple lines on the subject, but must have had their attention called in their own rambles to the many objects he there enumerates as among the beauties of his lane; yet excepting the little girl driving the cows, he introduces no human wonder, but confines himself to noticing animal and vegetable life.

Now all lanes abound with industrious ants, agile frogs, and at the proper season with springing mushrooms, (for the vegetable, unlike the human mushroom, has its set time for appearing, while these last claim "all seasons for their own,") but not one in a dozen of the walkers in a lane notice them they are so common; but my lane, besides ants, bugs, frogs and mushrooms, had a human wonder, and no one could meet Adelia, such was her most romantic name, without stopping to gaze, and, if it were possible, entering into conversation with her. She seemed the very embodiment of Thomson's "lovely young Lavinia," and though fortune had never smiled upon her in any way, she was quite as graceful and delicate as if she had been reduced from some high estate, instead of being, as she was, the daughter of a cottier, and the grand-daughter of a queer, cross old woman, crabbed enough to sour the sweetest temper, and with whom, at the time of my story, this the wonder of *my* lane was living.

My acquaintance with this rural beauty commenced in a very interesting manner, by being made the bearer, not of an offer of marriage, but of a highly indignant epistle on the subject of an offer that she had refused, and which, in the opinion of the writer, she had been very wicked in so doing. The angry adviser was a maiden aunt, who, therefore, wrote most feelingly on the subject, and who held a responsible post in our household, and as I was going to pass some time in the village where the fair Delia resided, I willingly undertook to deliver it, though I did not then know its contents. The day after my arrival there, I thought of Sarah's letter, and on asking for a direction to Adelia Ducros, (she had a drop of foreign blood in her) I was overwhelmed with questions as to what I knew of her, and what I had to do with her. I was quite surprised at this interest taken by my friends in one so lovely as I knew this girl to be, and to satisfy my curiosity one of the young ladies offered to go with me to the house and tell me the story by the way.

I must confess that at first I was so absorbed



with delight at the beauties of nature that were spread lavishly on every side, that I could hardly listen to the tale my companion was so eager to impart to me, and it was only in her telling me (after an exclamation of delight on my part at the picturesque beauty in the situation of a cottage,) that it was the home of my heroine that I would give her my attention at all, and in truth a fitter home for a village belle and beauty could hardly be imagined; it was a small, a very small house, but it had an air of venerableness about it that but few in our modern world can boast. It was close to the banks of a stream that rejoiced in the name of Linton Water—how it escaped being called Factory Creek or Bloody-run, or some such popular title, none can say—but such was the fact, and on the banks of this fair water, with rocks for a background and mountains in the distance, dwelt this wonder of an humble born beauty.

I knew that Delia, as she was called for shortness, was employed in a silk factory; that for the high wages that were given she had left her native place some three years before; and that she entirely supported her grand-mother. But I was now told of her trials, both of heart and spirits. Her grand-parent was, or fancied herself an invalid, and being very odd and a great talker was often visited by the ladies of the neighborhood, both from motives of compassion and amusement; they ministered to her fancied wants, and Delia to her real ones; they were amused by her, and she tormented; and now in addition to her daily cares and troubles, she had the great one of having refused this offer of marriage, by which she had exasperated the old woman, affronted all her relations, and surprised her friends, to say nothing of the despair of the lover, who was determined to hang, drown and shoot himself all at once if she did not relent. It was a very uncommon affair all together, except in novels where such things are very common indeed, but as this is a true story I shall tell the tale in regular style and expect to be believed implicitly.

"About two months since," said my companion, "our village was enlivened, and our belles delighted by the arrival of a very handsome, well dressed, fashionable looking young man—an unmarried one he was pronounced to be even before his letters of introduction, which were many, had been delivered, and of course great was the attention he received. You do not know how badly we are off for beaux here, so you must not think lightly of us for being pleased when one man appears. This one was very agreeable, and for a week the young ladies had his entire devotions, general ones to be sure, but that was so much the better, for then all had hope, when suddenly he

was seized with the factory mania, for day after day did he spend in the silk nooks, and from that very disagreeable place the cocoonery to the room where the finest silks are produced, did he take his daily round. In the winding room, however, he was most stationary, and it is only lately that the secret attraction that kept him there has come out. That as you may surmise was our beauty that we are now going to see."

"And pray," said I, "how long was it before the wise owner of the factory found out this wonderful secret? A commonly observing girl of twelve years old would have suspected the reason that kept a handsome young man in a dingy, noisy work-room, with a beautiful girl the occupant of it."

"Oh! the girls of the factory talked enough about it, I suppose, but as Mrs. Grant was away at that time the affair had not been made public?"

"What had she to do with it?" I began, when my companion stopped me by saying,

"If you will not ask me so many questions I will tell you the story in a very pretty, interesting way, but if you will interrupt me and be so very impatient, I will even serve you according to the story of 'Captain Rice, who g'in a treat,' and never get you further than the beginning, so now be quiet."

Upon this terrible threat, of course I became very demure, and Mary continued—

"What Mrs. Grant had to do with it was this: Delia has always been her especial protégée from her first coming here, and it was in her parlor that the young people first met, and she it was who first divulged the story. She had been requested by her husband to look over some skein silk that he was particularly proud of, and that had been prepared for an exhibition with peculiar care, and she and Delia were sorting them in the parlor when Mr. Henry Brooks was admitted. Mrs. Grant of course left her employment to converse with her guest, and in a few moments Delia gathering up the silks disappeared. Mr. Brooks expressed his regret that her lovely friend should so soon leave them, and she laughingly informed him that her 'lovely friend' was a factory girl, and the subject dropped. She left home the next day on a visit, and did not return for a fortnight. Her first visitor on her arrival was Mr. Henry Brooks, who with the greatest impetuosity besought her to use her influence with Delia in favor of his suit, for that he was madly in love with her, and that she had refused his offer of marriage, and he consequently most unhappy.

"You may imagine Mrs. Grant's surprise; at first she laughed at him, but the youngster seemed so very miserable she had not the heart

to laugh long, and set herself to listen seriously to this sudden love. Delia, he said, would not listen to him, he had been to see her in her forlorn home, and had a warm advocate in her grand-mother—he had waylaid her in all her walks—he had tried prayers and entreaties—he had told her he was alone in the world—no one to love him—no one to please or displease—he was rich, he was generous; but to all and every thing was the same reply, 'I cannot love you'—and now she would not speak to him or answer him, and in his despair he had come to her protectress to beg her good offices. Mr. Grant was at first amused, and then a little distrustful, but being very tender-hearted and not a little romantic, she ended by promising her influence in this strange suit—but in vain. Delia cried and sobbed at the picture of comfort that was drawn for her, of the unbounded love that was offered her, and in the end prayed Mrs. Grant not to say anything more, for that her life was made wretched by the gentleman's perseverance and her grand-mother's reproaches. Mrs. Grant was too good natured to persist, and hoping everything from time, advised the lover to withdraw for awhile and leave his cause to be advanced by the friends he left. He has done so, and has been absent about a fortnight, during which time the grand-mother has been advancing his cause by a series of reproaches and grumblings that have worried the poor girl almost into a fit of illness, without gaining any concessions from it, and so matters stood now."

When Mary had finished the story, we rose from the bank where we had been sitting, and crossing the water by some stepping stones stood before the cottage. The door was open, and opposite to it, seated in a large chair and propped by pillows, sat the old woman, the indignant grand-mother. Every feature expressed discontent and peevishness, and I really pitied the poor girl who was exposed daily to the tormenting of such a temper as looked forth from the sharp black eyes that were bent upon us. To my friend's greeting, and the hope she expressed that she was better now that the warm weather had fully come, she replied with a groan, and drawing a long breath, answered in a querulous tone, "that she was very bad indeed, that she had had a dreadful night, in which she thought she should have passed, (died) but that she had been mercifully spared for another day, that her faith was great, and that she was willing to depart, being quite ready," etc., looking all the time so unlike the patient saint that it was really ludicrous. In the same tone she launched out on the subject of Delia's perversity in refusing Mr. Brooks, as arising solely from a desire to torment her, and in fact making out she was a persecuted

sufferer, and the whole world in league to wrong her—"I hope, my dear miss," she said, turning to me, "you have brought a letter from my sister?"

I replied that I had.

"Ah! then I hope now," she said, "that matters will be settled; she will not dare to disobey her whatever she may do by a poor, old woman like me."

At this moment Delia entered, and highly as my expectations had been excited by the description I had heard of her beauty, they fell short of the reality. Tall and slender, her figure was grace itself; her small head was most beautifully set upon her fair, round throat, white as a lily. Her rich brown hair waved over her brow, and fell in ringlets round her face, while her soft hazel eyes had a drooping and beseeching expression that went to your heart at once, and I did not wonder at the ardent southerner's violent fancy, or at his inclination to remove this sweet looking creature to a more elevated position. Gentle and refined as was her appearance, her manners were equally so, and the soft and subdued tone of voice in which she answered my companion's questions was cheering to the ear. Contrary to the old woman's order she did not open her letter while we sat there, but when we rose to go she accompanied us out, and turning to my companion, said—

"Oh! Miss Mary, will you be so very kind as to stay with me a few moments, while I read aunt's letter—I well know what it is about and what her advice will be, and I feel so miserable that I want sympathy instead of rebuke."

Of course we willingly offered to remain, and awaited the perusal of the epistle. As Delia feared it was full of angry reproaches "at her wickedness in daring to have a will of her own in the choice of a husband, when such a sweet, rich, young man wanted to marry her—one who was not ashamed of her poor relations, and who would make them all ladies at once." She concluded by saying he had been to see her, and was as *polite* to her as if she had been a queen, and she thought he was the very "picture" of the dear young lords that she had read about in novels. There was a P. S. to this that I was the first to see, as the turn-over was such a blot that Delia did not look at it, and this gave a new light to the subject, and diminished the wonder at the refusal of the rich lover in our minds. It was simply this—"George Grafton has gone away from here these four weeks—folks say to sea, and I hope he may be drowned before he comes back, so you see you need think no more of him." The color that dyed the face and neck of Delia at my reading aloud these words needed no comment. She stood for a moment irresolute, and then said,

"I need not, I am sure, ask you young ladies twice not to mention this to grand-mother. She hates George, because he always liked me, and indeed he is a very good, clever—" but the poor girl here began to cry so bitterly that she could say no more; and her grand-mother's shrill voice calling, "You Delia—I say—I want you," put an end to our conference, and hastily giving our promise to say nothing of her postscript, we parted.

That very afternoon who should make his appearance in the hotel piazza opposite to us, but the aristocratic, love-smitten Mr. Brooks—and a very handsome, loveable looking young fellow he was, and I thought but for Mr. George Grafton the humble having pre-occupied the ground, which in love as in law is nine points in one's favor, he might have been successful. But I knew his case to be desperate. Of course his first walk was down the lane to Linton water at the hour the factory stopped work, and the first person he spoke to was Delia, but what passed between them no one knew. It was inferred, however, that it could not have been very agreeable to him, as late in the evening he paid Mrs. Grant a visit and was in a very cross, disagreeable mood.

The next day his humble love was invisible to all eyes, she was sick, her grand-mother said, too sick to work, though not too sick to take a walk at sunrise, at which time she had seen her go out dressed for walking, and stay for an hour. This looked very odd, and the next day when I called at the cottage she was still sick, though the old woman declared she had been out in the moonlight for two hours the night previous when she thought she was asleep, though she was awake watching her. Delia looked so distressed, and really appeared to be so sick that I could not bear to question her, and merely remarking that the dews were heavy and unwholesome at that season, I came away. For a few days I did not see her, as I heard she had resumed her work at the factory; and as Mr. Brooks was always haunting the lane, I gave up my favorite walk for a time, hoping he would tire of his unsuccessful suit and take himself off.

My wishes for once were gratified. Mr. Brooks vanished from the village, though not before he had endured the vexation of being the pity of his friends, and the laughing stock of the more common inhabitants.

Mrs. Grant had been summoned one morning very early to the cottage of Mrs. Ducros, by a messenger, who stated that she was very sick and wanted to see her immediately. She stopped for me on her way, and when we arrived there, we found the old woman in a bed and a neighbor attending her. I asked for Delia of course, and oh! the torrent of rage, this meek suffering creature

poured forth, on her grand-daughter's name being mentioned. After she had exhausted herself, without our being any the wiser as to the cause of her anger, she pulled a letter from under her pillow, and directed me to read it out. It was from Delia, and before I had read many lines I had to pause from excessive astonishment.

She told her grand-mother "that finding her life miserable from the attentions of Mr. Brooks, and her never-ending argument about the duty of marrying him; to put the matter at rest, and prevent the possibility of its ever being renewed, she had married her former lover, George Grafton. They had been married a week, immediately upon the re-appearance of Mr. Brooks, and that she and her husband hoped to be forgiven by her grand-mother, and allowed to return and take care of her. George, she said, had been in the employ of a neighboring manufacturer for some weeks, and was in the receipt of such good wages that they would be more comfortable than they ever were."

I was not so much surprised at this denouement as my companion, who had never heard of this lover before—but we both joined in endeavoring to console the old woman and to counsel forgiveness. It was a hard case to manage—to miss being made a lady of was a severe trial to such an old fool, and to be thwarted in her will a bitter dose to such a domineering spirit. But as she could not but confess that the young man was very clever, and that his only crimes were being poor and no gentleman, we had strong hopes that our arguments, to say nothing of the necessity of the case, would calm her—and so it proved. In a few days Delia and her good looking, industrious husband were settled at the cottage on the banks of Linton water; and Mr. Brooks was dashing off his mortification at Saratoga, where he had strong hopes of finding some young lady who would have better taste than the factory girl.

Five years sped rapidly by, and again I was walking in that sweet lane, and admiring the lovely "water" as it sparkled under the bright rays of a summer sun. Of course I could not but remember the cottage which had been the scene of the romantic events I have been relating. But it was not there. In its stead was a beautiful country-house—a handsome portico reached to its roof—a lovely garden stretched around it. The shores of the "water" and the rocks in the background were all that were the same.

And in that pretty home lived my heroine, a lady now, if money and importance were all that had been wanting to make her so before. Her husband's mechanical genius and industrious

habits had been crowned with that success which in our happy country *useful* talents never fail to command. A partner now in the factory in which he once was employed as a workman, with wealth yearly increasing, he built his house on the spot his fair wife most loved, and she has never for one moment regretted the choice she made in her humble lover.

The rejected gentleman soon consoled himself with a wife taken from his own sphere of life. But an annual remembrance of her in the shape of a large order for printed cottons for his plantation from her husband's factory, serves to show that he still remembers and has forgiven "The Wonder of the Lane."

THE DEAD GUEST.

A TALE FROM THE GERMAN OF ZSCHOKKE.*

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

ONE of my friends, Waldrich by name, had been some two years out of the university, and was leading rather an idle life in a provincial capital, when the trumpet of war sounded through the land, calling to the deliverance of Germany from the yoke of the French Conqueror. The talk in city and hamlet was of freedom and fatherland; and thousands of young men eagerly enlisted under the sacred banner. Waldrich shared this pious zeal, and giving to the winds his chance of a judgeship, abandoned the pen for the sword.

He had not yet attained his majority, and was much in want of funds for travelling expenses; he wrote therefore to his guardian asking permission to fight for his country, and entreating him to send him a hundred thalers. His guardian, Herr Bantes, was a rich manufacturer in the little town of Herbesheim, who had brought up Waldrich, having kept him in his house till he was old enough to go to the high school. He replied to his letter as follows:—

"MY YOUNG FRIEND—When you are a year older, you can do as you please with yourself and the property remaining to you. Till then I beg you to suppress your zeal for the fatherland, and attend to your business, by which you must expect to earn your bread hereafter. I know what is my duty to my late friend, your father, and shall not send you a copper. I remains yours, &c."

But within the letter was a folded paper, containing fifteen louis d'ors. Waldrich was at a loss to account for this inconsistency, till he espied some writing on the paper in which the money had been folded, and picking it up from the floor, read these words:

* It is proper to mention that this is not a literal, nor even a close translation. Most of the tales of Zschokke require pruning and condensation; and in some instances the omission not only of paragraphs, but of whole pages is necessary in order to present a story interesting, without being tedious.

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"Do not suffer yourself to be discouraged; but venture all in the holy cause of our poor Germany. May God protect you! so prays your former playmate.
FREDERIKA."

This playmate was no other than the young daughter of Herr Bantes. Waldrich could not conjecture how she had got access to her father's letter; but he was inspired, more by her patriotism than even by the sight of the louis d'ors, which she had perhaps saved from her own allowance. He wrote on the spot to his guardian, closing with a few lines of acknowledgment to "his Thusnelde," the little maiden, (he forgot that the little maiden had grown four years older since he last saw her,) and departed, proud and light of spirit, to the Rhine and the army.

It is not my purpose to recount Waldrich's deeds of valor; enough that he served gallantly. Napoleon at length was happily dethroned and sent to Elba. My young hero remained with his regiment of infantry, having been promoted to the rank of lieutenant. After the final campaign against the French was over, and the deliverance of Europe complete, the soldiers returned to their homes with martial music and songs of victory.

Waldrich, who had fought in two battles and several skirmishes, had been so fortunate as to escape without a wound. He was much esteemed for his intelligence and amiable character; and flattered himself with the hope that his bravery would be rewarded with some lucrative situation; but he was destined to be disappointed. There were too many sons and cousins of persons in office to be provided for; who had the advantage, besides, of aristocratic birth. Waldrich's parents had been simple burghers. He remained with the regiment; the more readily, as he had spent what was left of his inheritance, which had been some time before remitted to him by his former guardian. But not unwelcome at least, though unexpected, was the order, that his men should occupy the garrison of Herbesheim.

At the head of his company, for the captain, a rich baron, was on furlough, Waldrich returned to his native town. He was moved at the sight of the old gray towers, and the well known church



apies! The troops entered the place with music and flying colors, and were quartered in suitable lodgings; the commander, of course, in the most distinguished, that is, the richest house, which happened to be the dwelling of Herr Bantes.

Waldrich observed that several gentlemen whom he had known in his boyhood, did not appear to recognize him; and he went alone to the house of the manufacturer. Herr Bantes received him as a stranger, with formal respect, showed him the apartments that had been occupied by his predecessor, and invited him to make himself quite at home. The lieutenant was somewhat embarrassed by finding himself incognito, but without explanation, after he had changed his dress, descended to join the family at dinner.

Here he found, besides Herr Bantes and his wife and some of his upper clerks, well known to him, a young lady whom he did not remember to have seen before. The conversation was upon general subjects, including the new garrison, and Waldrich expressed his hope that the soldiers would become popular among the townspeople. All the while he was wondering what had become of his little playmate Frederika; and at length ventured to ask his host if he had any children.

"A daughter," answered Madame Bantes, and motioned toward the young lady, who modestly cast her eyes down on the table. Waldrich opened his wide in astonishment to see the little girl grown so tall—but said nothing, being not yet ready to discover himself.

Madame Bantes spoke of a son, who had died when a child; and her husband interrupted her with—"be consoled, wife; who knows, if he had lived, that he would not have turned out such another worthless fellow as George!"

It was now Waldrich's turn to fix his eyes on the table.

"But, papa—how do you know that George is such a worthless fellow?" asked Frederika. The question warned the lieutenant's heart better than the glass of Burgandy he was taking to cover his embarrassment. The mouth that spoke was so sweet, and the voice so clear and soft! Herr Bantes went on to relate to his guest all the chief incidents of this George's boyhood, up to his joining the army. "It is a pity for him"—concluded he. "The lad, if he had not made himself a soldier, might have been anything he desired in the profession of law—and a wealthy man besides."

Frederika ventured to say something in praise of the spirit with which he had devoted himself for his country; but her father interrupted her with a tirade against war and the business of arms; and Waldrich saw that he was the same honest, free-spoken, head-strong old man as ever.

He attempted only to convince him that Frederika might be right in giving poor George credit for some goodness of heart; and wished his incognito at an end.

It was not, however, so impenetrable as he imagined. Madame Bantes, a quiet, observing person, had recognized him at once by the sound of his voice, and her remembrance of his boyish features; and was silently wondering all the while what reason he could have for not making himself known. In the evening, when the tea-bell sounded, Waldrich found no one in the room but Frederika, who had just returned from a visit, and thrown off her shawl.

"Miss Bantes," said the young man, advancing toward her, "let me thank you for your generous defence of my friend Waldrich."

"You know him, then, sir?"

"He often thought of you, but not so often as you deserved."

"He was brought up with us. But I take it a little unkindly of him, that since he left us he has never come back, even on a visit. Is he doing well now?"

"People do not complain of him; no one has so much reason to complain as yourself."

"Then he must be estimable; for I have nothing to say against him."

"He is, as I know, your debtor."

"You mistake—he owes me nothing."

"He spoke of some money for travelling expenses, received as he was setting out for the army, when his guardian would advance him nothing."

"I did not lend, but gave it to him."

"Is he, therefore, less your debtor, Thusnelde?"

Frederika looked earnestly at the officer at this word; a light flashed upon her, and she colored deeply.

"Is it possible?" cried she, in joyful surprise.

"Indeed—dear Frederika, if I may yet call you so—the debtor—the offender stands before you, and begs your forgiveness. Ah! had he known before what he now knows, he would not so long have stayed away from Herbesheim!" And he took her hand and kissed it. Madame Bantes just then came in; Frederika ran to her, exclaiming—"mamma, do you know what our guest's name is?"

The lady smiled and answered, "George Waldrich."

"How did you know, mamma? and yet you said nothing," cried the young lady; and still she felt shy of looking at the tall, handsome officer, whom, in his military dress, she tried to identify with the wilful boy of other days. At last she exclaimed—"oh, yes! I see it! Where have been my eyes? There is even the mark of a

scratch on the left cheek, which he got one day that he climbed the highest tree in the garden to fetch me a citron pear!"

Waldrich joined in her recollections, kissed the hand of her mother, and made many excuses for his apparent indifference and neglect; entreating them to receive him once more to their confidence and affection. Then Herr Bantes joined the party, and being informed by his daughter who was their guest, stretched out his hand cordially.

"You are welcome—Mr. Waldrich; you have grown quite out of my recollection. Yes; we must call you no longer George, but Mr. Waldrich—or Herr von Waldrich. Are you made a noble?"

"Oh, no!"

"But the ribbon there in your button-hole?"

"That is in remembrance of our company having taken an entrenchment from the enemy, and maintained it against three or four assaults."

"How many men did it cost?"

"Twelve killed—seventeen wounded."

"Twenty-nine men—for half an ell of ribbon! Dear wars—to my fancy: But come, sit down; Frederika, make the tea. How stand your funds? Did you get much booty?"

Waldrich shook his head, smiling. "We did not go to battle," he answered, "to obtain booty, but to save our country from becoming the prey of the French."

The news was soon abroad that Herr Bantes' foster son had arrived; and Waldrich saw many of his old acquaintance in the town. He lived after this very happily, domesticated with the manufacturer, whom he looked upon as his father. Frederika was indeed like a sister to him; and in spite of the shrewd prognostications of some observers, nothing was said of such a thing as love. The young lady was twenty years old, it is true, but she had been always at home with her mother; and Herr Bantes did not approve the visits of suitors, although one so lovely and so rich might have had many.

One day, it happened to be Waldrich's birthday, on his return from a short absence, he was met by Herr Bantes with a letter for him—addressed "To Captain George Waldrich." The whole house rejoiced at this promotion; old Bantes ordered some of his choicest wine to be brought out in celebration of the event, and drank to the health of the new captain. Then followed the birthday ceremony of kissing all round the company. When his turn came to Frederika, the young officer felt strangely embarrassed; the young lady blushed crimson, as she submitted to the ceremony, while her mother fixed her eyes on a ring upon her own finger. This little occurrence seemed unaccountably to interrupt the

perfect harmony and frankness that had hitherto prevailed in the family.

The captain was obliged after this to leave Herbesheim for a few days, but Frederika made him promise to return by her birthday, the tenth of November. While at the capital he bought a new and beautiful harp, with some choice music; as a present for her. Returning he found Herr Bantes in unusual spirits; he walked the hall continually, rubbing his hands and smiling; and his wife, who watched him attentively, whispered to Waldrich, "my good man has some pleasant surprise in store for us."

She was not mistaken. They sat down to the table; and when Frederika raised her plate, she found under it a rich necklace of oriental pearls, a costly diamond ring, and a letter addressed to herself. She looked at the necklace and ring with sparkling eyes, then handed them to her mother, and broke the seal of her letter. Her face expressed astonishment as she read, but she said nothing, laying the letter on the table when she had finished it.

"Let the letter go round, too!" cried her father. She reached it in silence to Madame Bantes.

"Now, Rika," said Herr Bantes, "has surprise taken away your breath, that you cannot tell papa anything about it?"

"Who is this Mr. von Hahn?" asked the young lady.

"Who?—but the son of my old and esteemed friend, the famous banker? Did you think I meant you for any other? His father has done better than I—and has already retired; his son carries on the business himself. I promised you to him long ago."

Madame Bantes looked very grave as she read the letter. Its contents were as follows:—

"I am truly grieved, dear Miss Frederika, that I cannot pay you a visit on your birthday, but my physician has forbidden me to venture a journey in the unfavorable weather, so that I am compelled still to deny myself, and send this letter, instead of coming in person to kneel before you as a suitor for your hand. I would have your own bright lips confirm the promise of our parents, who betrothed us in childhood. Believe me, lovely girl, I shall not rest till I can hasten to your feet, and learn my sentence there. I can claim only your hand; your heart, I know, must be a gift of your own: but leave me, at least, the hope of winning it in time. Meanwhile, when I tell you how happy a line from you would make me, giving me more strength than all the physician's art, you will not, I am sure, let me entreat the favor in vain. Accept the accompanying trifles, and permit me, in love and respect, to subscribe myself

Your betrothed,
EDWARD VON HAHN."

"But, papa," said Frederika, after a pause, "I have never in my life seen the banker von Hahn."

"Well—little one—I can satisfy you. He is a tall, handsome young man, with a fair complexion."

"When did you see him, papa?"

"When I was last at the capital; it is—let me see—ten—twelve years since: when I brought you back the wax doll, then almost as large as yourself. Edward was then eighteen, and taller than I am, with a real milk-maid's face."

"Father, I should like to have seen him before receiving such a letter."

"Truly, it was a bad business that he could not come himself on your birthday. When I was betrothed to your mother I came in person—eh—wife? But no matter; the great banker is worth securing; think, what a great personage he is at Vienna and Berlin! He has as much power as a prince. What say you, wife?"

"I find your choice in this as in everything else, excellent," replied the lady, dropping her eyes on the supper-table.

"And you too, mamma!" cried Frederika.

Herr Bantes filled his glass, and called on them all to drink the bride's health; but the cheerfulness of the company seemed to have departed. The captain sat in a reverie, without tasting anything before him; Madame Bantes looked troubled—Frederika sad. "Come, come," cried the father, "I do not mean to force you to marry, my child; but I doubt not, when you have once seen the young man, that you will fling your arms about your father's neck and thank him."

"But till I have seen him, dear papa. Grant my birthday request—to say nothing more about him."

"Nay—Rika," said the old man, rubbing his forehead, "that is an odd request. Your mother made none such——"

"Pardon," interrupted the mother—"but you must not contradict Rika on her birthday."

"You are right, wife; and the new moon is at hand; we shall have a change of weather."

And after supper Frederika sat down to play on her new harp.

Herr Bantes kept his word, and said nothing about the expected visitor von Hahn, but he did not fail every day to consult the barometer, and to express his satisfaction when he saw the weather begin to brighten.

"But," said his wife, in a low and confidential tone, "it appears to me most prudent that you should write to Mr. von Hahn not to come to Herbesheim before Christmas. If I do not altogether believe in popular talk, I cannot help feeling some slight uneasiness."

"Ah, wife—I know what you are thinking of; the Dead Guest."

To explain this it is necessary to mention that

there was a current popular tradition, that once in a hundred years, during Advent, the Dead Guest made his appearance in Herbesheim, paid his court to betrothed maidens, and ended by twisting their necks. They were found in the morning, dead in bed, with their faces turned behind them. What distinguished this from ordinary spectres was, that he appeared not at the hour of midnight, but in the full light of day, dressed like other men; and stranger than all, when he found a maiden who was betrothed, he would present himself as another suitor, and gain her heart by irresistible fascination to reward her ingenuous confidence by twisting her neck.

How this tradition originated, none could tell. In the church records were found the names of three young women who had died suddenly during Advent in 1720. The following note was appended, "with faces turned backward, as an hundred years ago. God be gracious to their souls!" This proved the more remote antiquity of the legend; but unfortunately older records were inaccessible.

Though some affected to laugh at this superstition, the greater number yielded a sort of half belief. Even the old priest, a very reasonable man, went no farther than to pronounce it "strange and incredible."

Madame Bantes was half ashamed of being thought to believe in this wild tradition; but she urged that there was no necessity for having the betrothal during Advent. "What was to be lost," she said, "by the delay of a few weeks?" But her husband was inexorable; for he thought the whole town might be instructed by seeing that they despised the superstition.

"But it appears," insisted the dame, "that some misfortune rests upon this time; it has been the subject of record; if we brave popular opinion in this instance—and, which heaven forbid! any thing *should* happen——"

"Ha! if Rika's neck should be lost! Eh!"

"No—but for example—this weather is inclement, and Mr. Von Hahn is an invalid. The journey—the exposure—might increase his malady; we might after all, have a sick, perhaps a dead guest! And in such an event the superstition would be confirmed by your self-will——"

Herr Bantes looked grave, but his pride was piqued, and he refused to yield the point. Nevertheless, the conversation left a thorn in his breast; for he loved his daughter too well to risk aught, and he could not help shuddering inwardly as Advent approached, and the weather became settled and fair. He consulted the barometer as regularly as ever, but now with the hope of seeing the mercury fall.

One day when Waldrich came into the parlor,

he saw Frederika sitting by the window, leaning her head on her new harp.

"I am sent by your mother, Frederika," said he, "to see if you will take a drive with us into the country?"

The young lady shook her head, but did not look up.

The captain stood waiting a reply—then moved toward the door; suddenly he turned back, and said coaxingly—"come with us; the weather is charming." Startled at the tone in which she answered "no"—he went to her and took the hand on which she was resting her forehead. Her face was bathed in tears.

"What is the matter?" he asked anxiously.

"Is mamma going to take me to meet him? Is he coming to-day?" demanded the young lady, wiping her red eyes with her handkerchief.

Waldrich's countenance fell. "Oh, Frederika," he exclaimed with emotion—"he must not come—till I am gone!"

"You—gone?"

"Yes; I wrote to the general on your birthday, entreating him to appoint me some other station. I have not yet received an answer."

The young girl looked up sorrowfully and said, "George, you are not displeased with us?"

"I cannot, I must not, remain here."

"Are you in earnest, George? I shall be vexed with you all my life."

"You will kill me if you compel me to be present at your wedding."

"That shall never be! Who said I had given my promise?"

"You will not dare deny it."

"I can never give it!" sobbed Frederika, and covered her face with her hands. After a pause, during which both were much agitated, Waldrich came close to her, and said in a melancholy tone, "Frederika, is it possible for us still to be as we have been to each other?"

"George, can we ever be otherwise to one another than we have been?"

"Ah, Frederika, I knew not how great was my happiness. Now I feel what I have lost!"

"Lost, Waldrich? Do not make me wretched. That is a dreadful word; never say it again."

"But we must part——"

"There, George—take my hand: I will be the bride of the Dead Guest—before——. But say nothing to my father or mother: I will speak when it is time."

She gave him her hand, which he covered with kisses. Frederika then desired him to go to her mother, and tell her she would soon be ready; but left alone she sank into a seat, and forgot to prepare for the drive. At last Madame Bantes came herself to fetch her daughter, whom she

found with her head drooping on her breast, over which swept the long, fair ringlets; her hands folded in her lap.

"What are you thinking about, Rika?" asked the mother.

"I have been praying, mother."

"Is it well with you, child?"

"Oh—very well!"

"In earnest? You seem to have been weeping."

"I have wept, but I am happy." And rising she put on her bonnet; then going to the mirror, tied on as a sash the rose-colored ribbon Waldrich had given her with the harp on her birthday. Madame Bantes was silent; but she saw the danger of trusting the young people with any more private interviews.

The next evening a party of her friends was assembled at the house of the manufacturer. The conversation among a hundred other topics, turned on the approach of Advent, and the tradition of the Dead Guest. Many persons had heard of it, but none knew more; and when Waldrich mentioned that he had heard long ago a tale throwing light on its origin, he was assailed on all sides with entreaties to relate what he could remember.

"It was two hundred years ago," he began—"when the thirty years' war was commenced and the Elector Friedrich had placed the crown of Bohemia on his head. The emperor and the elector of Bavaria, at the head of Catholic Germany, re-conquered this kingdom; the decisive battle was fought near Prague; the Elector Friedrich lost the battle and the crown. The news flew swiftly through Germany; all the Catholic states rejoiced over Friedrich's misfortune, whom, on account of the short duration of his few months' reign, they called the Winter King. Our good ancestors in Herbesheim used to talk as much about politics and state affairs as we, their worthy descendants. They showed as much joy over the defeat and flight of the Winter King, as we some years later over those of the Emperor Napoleon.

"Three lovely young maidens sat, talking with each other of late events. They were intimate friends, and were all betrothed; the first was named Veronica, the second Francisca—the third Jacobea. They conversed of the Winter King, and each avowed her belief that he had not left Germany. 'I would,' cried Jacobea, 'oh, I would he came to our town! He should die by the hand of my lover, and my lover should have at least a countship for his reward!'

"'Nay,' said Veronica, 'thy lover hath not heart enough for such a deed of valor. My bridegroom should slay the Winter King, and win the countship from thee.'

"'Boast not!' cried Francisca, 'my lover is the

strongest of all. If I commanded him, he would hurl the Grand Turk from his seat. Be not too sure of the countship!"

"While they talked they heard the clatter of horses' feet in the street, and all three ran to the window. There was a frightful storm; the wind blew the rain violently against the houses, and the water ran in streams from the roofs and along the streets.

"Who journeys in such weather,' cried Jacobea, 'travels not for pleasure!'

"He is driven by necessity,' said Veronica.

"Or an evil conscience,' observed Francisca.

"Just opposite, before the sign of the Dragon, thirteen horsemen drew up, and alighted in haste. Twelve of them stood by their horses; the thirteenth, who was dressed in white, went into the house, and soon the landlord with his servants came out, the horses were led to the stable, while the travellers entered the inn. In spite of the rain people ran to see the strangers and their horses; the finest horse belonged to the rider in white; the beast was also white from head to foot, with splendid trappings.

"The Winter King!" cried all three of the maidens, looking astonished at each other.

"There was a bustle without, and presently entered the three lovers of the maidens. 'Do you know,' cried one, 'that the Winter King is here?'

"A capital chance!" said another.

"The white rider seems in great distress," observed the third.

"The three maidens shuddered, then looked at each other, then joined their hands, as in token that they all embraced the same fortune. Loosing their hands, each then turned to her betrothed.

"If my beloved,' said Veronica, 'lets the Winter King leave this town alive, then will I rather be the bride of the Winter King than his wife.' And she pronounced an oath to confirm her sentence.

"If my beloved,' said Francisca, 'suffers the Winter King to survive this night, then will I rather embrace death than him; and I will refuse to give him my hand.' And she also took an oath.

"Then said Jacobea, 'The key of my bridal chamber is lost, and can be found no more unless my beloved brings me to-morrow his sword red with the blood of the Winter King.'

"The three men were startled; but the plighted maidens were inexorable, and the lovers then swore that the Winter King should not see the morrow's sun. They took leave of the maidens, who sat and conversed of the bravery and renown of their affianced husbands, and of the fame and riches this deed was to procure them; nor was the countship forgotten. The three young men

went over to the 'Dragon,' ordered wines, enquired particularly concerning the strange lodgers, and which was the room occupied by the principal person among them. They sat drinking and revelling till late at night.

"Next morning twelve of the horsemen rode away in great haste, in the midst of the storm. The thirteenth was found dead in his bed bathed in blood, and having three deep wounds in his side. Nobody could say who he was; but the host averred that he was no king; and he was right, for the Winter King escaped in safety as is known to Holland, and lived many years after. The dead guest was buried the same day, not in the church-yard among good Christians, but in an unconsecrated spot, where carrion was sometimes thrown.

"Meanwhile the three affianced maidens waited impatiently the return of their lovers; but they came not. Search was made for them, and enquiries throughout the town; but no one had seen them since midnight when they were drinking at the inn. Neither the host nor servants of the 'Dragon' could say what had become of them. The three maidens wept their loss night and day, and repented of the evil deed to which they had devoted good and true men. Most of all mourned Jacobea, for it was she who first suggested the idea of the murder.

"Thus three days went by, and nothing had been heard of the missing. On the evening of the third there was a knocking at the door of Jacobea's house, and a stranger of distinguished appearance presented himself, and asked for her. He was the bearer of a letter, which he had promised a young man to deliver in person. How did Jacobea's heart beat! for the letter came from her lover.

"It was quite dark, and the mother hastened to bring a couple of lamps that her daughter might read the letter. By the light she observed that the stranger was a man about thirty years of age, remarkably tall and thin, dressed altogether in black, and wearing a black cap and plume. His dress was ornamented with gold and pearls, and he had a large diamond ring on his finger. His features were regular and noble, but his face was very pale, notwithstanding the fire of his dark eyes; and his black attire made him appear still paler. He took a seat while they all read the letter, which ran as follows:

"We have done the deed. Farewell, Jacobea, since I have lost the key of thy bridal chamber. I go to war in Bohemia, and to seek a new bride who will not ask as a pledge of love a blooded sword. I send back thy ring.' The ring fell out from the letter.

"Jacobea nearly swooned at this cruel letter;

but recovering herself she wept and reproached her faithless lover. Her father and mother consoled her; and the stranger said—'had I known the contents of this letter, so truly as I am Count von Grabern, I should have finished the false one with my trusty sword. But weep not for him, fairest lady! One pearly drop flowing over that rosy cheek should be enough to extinguish the flame of your love!'

"But Jacobea ceased not to weep. The count at last took leave, entreating permission to call the following day. Next day he came, and finding the maiden alone, said to her, 'I could not sleep last night for thinking continually of your beauty and your tears. At least you owe me a smile to restore the color to my cheeks pale with watching.'

"How can I smile?" asked Jacobea. "Has not my faithless lover broken our betrothal and sent back my ring?"

"The count took the ring and threw it from him. 'How gladly would I replace it with another!' cried he, and he drew off the splendid ring from his finger, and laid it on the table—'with this—or many others—or all my rich inheritance!'

"Jacobea blushed, and pushed back the jewel. 'Be not so stern,' said the count. 'Having once seen you I can never cease to love. Has your betrothed proved faithless?—forget him, and take a sweet revenge. My heart and my countship I lay at your feet!'

"It was not long before Jacobea began to think the count was right, and that it would be 'most becoming to forget her faithless lover. They talked much together; the count had fascinating manners, but the maiden thought him less handsome than the other, by reason of his singular paleness. But when he talked she forgot his strange complexion; in short she ceased to weep, and had to smile sometimes at the witty sallies of the count.

"The arrival of so distinguished a person in Herbesheim was soon noised abroad, also that he had a numerous train of attendants sumptuously apparelled, and was profuse in his display. It was known, too, that he had brought Jacobea a letter from her betrothed. When Veronica and Francisca heard this they came to their friend, and entreated her to ask if the distinguished count had heard nothing of *their* lovers. When she asked, the count replied that he would himself visit the maidens, to ascertain by their description who were their affianced husbands, so that he could give them the desired information.

"Meanwhile Jacobea said to herself as she looked at the valuable ring presented by her new suitor—'I have but now to reach out my hand

and take the countship without the necessity of dividing it with Veronica and Francisca. So that the murder has at least helped me to good fortune.' She showed the diamond to her parents, and told them of the count's proposal; and when on his return he brought her a casket containing a diamond cross and pearl necklace, they both commanded her not to refuse his suit, for that such a son-in-law pleased them right well. So that the count was received as a favored lover by the parents, to whom every day he gave rich presents; and Jacobea exulted in the prospect of becoming Countess von Grabern.

"When the strange count went to Veronica he found her handsomer than the first maiden, and the fair-haired Francisca pleased him still more. He told them severally that he had met the three plighted young men at a road-side inn, at supper with two young women. They were all going to Bohemia, and when they learned he was to pass through Herbesheim, one of them wrote the letter to Jacobea, while the others said they were better employed in entertaining their fair guests than in writing to the maidens they meant to desert. Instead of letters they gave him their betrothal rings to return, advising that the rings should be given to the men whose fingers they best fitted.

"Veronica assured the count that her ring fitted his hand admirably; and Francisca insisted that hers seemed made expressly for him. In short—he played the same part with the two others that he had with Jacobea, making them presents, and offering them his heart, hand and fortune. The three damsels were jealous each of the other, lest she should lose the prize, and they visited no more; so that the count could the more readily carry on the deception with them all.

"The three-fold courtship went on, and the count on the same day was formally betrothed to each of the maidens, in presence of their parents, expressing a wish that the marriage should take place in his ancestral castle. Each plighted damsel, when she gave him the kiss of betrothal, said—'why are you so pale, my love? lay aside your black dress.' And he answered to each, 'I wear black in fulfillment of a vow. On our wedding day you will see me red and white, like your own cheeks—dear one!'

"After the ceremony was over each maiden retired to her apartment. The next morning as they did not appear so early as usual, their parents went to awake them and found them dead in bed, their necks twisted so that the face looked behind.

"Cries of horror resounded through each of the three houses; and the alarm spread over the town. Suspicion fell, of course, on the count, and a party of men went to the 'Dragon' where he had lodged:



THE LONG ENGAGEMENT.

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

there they found the host in amazement, his late guest having disappeared with all his train, their horses and baggage. None had seen them depart, nor pass the gates of the town.

"At this mysterious disappearance everybody was amazed; and crossed themselves, or uttered a paternoster when they looked at the houses where the three murders had been committed. It was yet more strange that the various presents bestowed on the parents of the deceased had also vanished.

"A great number of people attended the funeral of the three unfortunate maidens. As they were carried into the church-yard, covered with a black pall, a tall, pale man was observed among the crowd, whom nobody had seen before; and what was singular he was dressed altogether in white. Three red spots appeared on his doublet, from which the blood slowly trickled down. This tall figure did not follow the corpses to the consecrated ground, but disappeared in one corner.

"*'Holy Maria!'* cried the host of the *'Dragon,'* 'it is the Dead Guest, who was buried there a month ago.'

"Terror seized the whole assemblage; they flew in every direction, and for three days and nights the coffins lay exposed to a violent storm of rain and sleet. When at length the alarm had somewhat subsided, and the parents of the deceased, by large offers of payment, had bribed persons to complete the burial, the coffins proved to be so light that the priest insisted on opening them. They were found empty, and were buried thus."

Such was the legend related by Waldrich. There was a dead silence when he had concluded; and afterward, though attempts were made by several, particularly Herr Bantes, to laugh at the folly of such a superstition, yet none of the company could shake off a feeling of uneasiness. When it was announced that the captain would narrate another appearance of the Dead Guest, there was universal silence and attention.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"I wonder Mary Alsop and Henry Justice do not marry!" said Jane Simpson to her friend Charlotte Way.

"It is strange," replied the latter, "for they have been engaged these four years. How it would annoy me to be seen with the same gentleman, season after season, and have every one asking me when I was to be married. For my part I don't intend to be engaged longer than a year."

"Well, I don't know," replied her younger companion. "If I loved a gentleman, I could wait for him a long time; for surely that would be better than marrying one I did not love."

"What a romantic little piece you are," replied the gay Charlotte. "Loving a poor man is well enough to talk of at school, but give me the substantial comforts of a rich man's home."

"But I didn't mean to say," replied Jane, blushing, "that I would be willing to marry a man who could not support me. I meant that if I should happen to love a poor man, I would be willing to wait until he could, by industry and frugality, get into a business that would support us, even if the period of probation was five or ten years."

"Oh! shocking," said Charlotte, "only to think of waiting ten years for a gentleman. One would be such a pattern of fidelity that one would get into the novels. And then really it would be such a foolish thing. The gentleman might die, or never get into a safe business after all, or he might prove faithless as Mr. Heron did, who, you know, was engaged to Mary Smith four years, and then deserted her to marry the rich southern heiress, Miss Daubney."

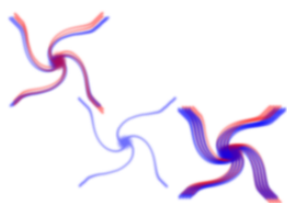
"Now you are too heartless," said Jane, "for I know you do not believe all you say. You would not surely marry a gentleman for his money."

"I would never marry one without it," replied Charlotte laughingly. "And I suppose one can love any one, for it's only a habit after all."

"Do not talk so, for indeed, indeed," said Jane earnestly, "you do not think thus."

"You will see, my dear," was the gay reply. "But really I must go now: I have staid already an hour, and I only intended dropping in for five minutes."

Charlotte Way was the daughter of a scheming mother, who had imbued the child with her own notions, to which her vanity and heartlessness contributed not a little. She and Jane had been schoolmates and intimate friends, but, as often



happens in such cases, as they grew older many points of difference appeared in their characters which were gradually cooling off the first ardor of their acquaintance. The conversation we have recorded was an instance of their contrariety of sentiment; and though Jane did not wish to believe that her friend was as heartless as her words implied, the conviction of it was soon forced on her.

It was the winter when they were both to come out, and each was soon the centre of a circle of admirers; for both were more than usually handsome. Charlotte was a gay, brilliant creature, always full of spirits, and just the girl to make a successful ball room coquette. Jane was of a quieter, but more earnest disposition, one of those amiable beings who shine best at the fire-side. The characters of their admirers differed as much as the characters of the two girls. It was soon apparent that Jane was the favorite of the most sterling young men of the place, though perhaps in accomplishments, and certainly in fortune they were inferior to the gay and graceful beaux who fluttered around Charlotte like moths around a candle, if we may use so old a simile.

Among the admirers of Jane was a young lawyer, who had toiled up from the obscure station of a poor farmer's son, through the grades of apprentice and petty schoolmaster, to his present position. He saw and loved Jane; but for a long time his modesty prevented a declaration. Accident, however, favored him, and he found that his affection was returned. He frankly told his prospects, which, like those of all young professional men who start without family influence, were sufficient to dispirit any but a person of the greatest energy; but, he added, he had no doubt of ultimate success, if she he loved could be contented with the plain household of a poor man. Jane had a noble and relying heart, and she fearlessly pledged her word to her suitor to wait, no matter how long.

Charlotte too, about the same time, made her selection. The gentleman was a young man, also a lawyer, who had just inherited a handsome estate, in the expectation of which he had been educated from childhood. He had gone to the city to study, and while there, had imbibed, it was whispered, along with the graces of the most fashionable society some of its vices. Whether Charlotte loved him or not was often a subject of discussion among her gossiping acquaintances. But when she rode through the streets with him, behind his pair of blood horses, there were not a few to envy her, even though she should obtain all this show and wealth without loving the possessor.

Before the ensuing winter Charlotte became

Mrs. Harcourt Belville, and was established in a magnificent mansion, just on the outskirts of the town. She and Jane had almost lost sight of each other; and Charlotte, after her brilliant alliance, altogether forgot her friend. Jane, in her now comparatively secluded circle, heard now and then of the gay parties which Charlotte gave and attended, but the former schoolmates never met.

Did we say never? Yes! they met, but after long years.

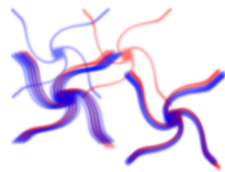
Twelve seasons had come and gone, when one morning Jane's husband, (after having by a long probation of six years won her for a bride,) on entering the court-house saw a criminal arraigned for forgery whose features struck him as familiar. He made enquiry and found that the prisoner was Harcourt Bellville, who, after having run through his fortune at the gaming table, had committed a crime which would send him to the penitentiary. He had that morning been arrested, and was now brought into court before the judge, prior to being committed to the county jail.

It fell to the lot of Jane's husband, as prosecuting attorney, to bring the offender to condign punishment; and though his heart bled, the demands of duty were imperative. The wife of the criminal was completely heart-broken. She and her husband had never lived happily together, and it was even said that her extravagance had accelerated his ruin. The disgrace of a public trial completely humbled her, however; and she gladly accepted the offer of a home with the neglected friend of her youth.

Her husband was sentenced to a long imprisonment; but died before his release.

His widow was now a changed being, and survived to regret, during a long and eventful life, the folly of her youth. She lived with Jane, and aided her to educate her promising family of children.

The young lawyer is now a man of wealth and influence, whose voice is heard in his country's councils. Which of the two schoolmates made the better choice?





THE LADIES'

AUNT PATTY AT HOME.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

You should have seen how warm and snug aunt Patty's house looked in the winter; the cellar windows were all banked up, the barn-yard levelled down with straw, and the barn itself so completely crammed that tufts of hay and unthreshed rye protruded through the crevices of the great folding doors, and in some places seemed almost forcing the clap-boards from their fastenings. It would have done your heart good to see the great golden and crimson ears of corn gleaming through the lattice work of the grain-house! Then the fat cows and lazy oxen basking in the sun and chewing their cuds so quietly and contented, it was a picture of comfort and thrift that you would have gone ten miles to see, providing you have a love for these things—which you have of course, or you will fling aunt Patty aside after this first sentence. The only uncomfortable things about the house were the six lombardy poplars, rooted firm and upright in the snow, and shivering in the wind like so many old maids forced to stand in the cold, without cloaks, and terrified with the idea that the gentlemen who looked that way would think very strange of it—but a spruce tree close by with a rose-bush laden with bright, red berries, which was haunted by snow-birds all winter long, served to keep the poplars in countenance; while a pet sheep, and the troop of hens that roved at large in the door-yard and garden left their tracks in the snow, and sometimes filled the bright, clear atmosphere with homely music, cheerful if not harmonious.

Then there was the wood-pile at the back-door rolled together like a mountain—"the ash leach" heaped full and ready for soap making the moment spring opened. There was a kennel for the toothless and half blind house dog, with all sorts of preparation for winter comfort which man or animal could desire.

Half a dozen of us village girls, as I have said in some other place, made a kind of extemporaneous home with aunt Patty. We spent almost every winter evening at her fire-side, and it sometimes happened—I beg the reader to believe it was pure accident always—that some three or four of the other sex would drop in and make themselves quite at home also. Of course we were very much astonished at this coincidence of taste and circumstance, and when these strange things began to happen frequently, we became a little superstitious, and went again and again to be certain if there really was a

destiny in it or not, a question that has not been thoroughly settled in my mind to this day.

One evening it was freezing cold, and just after we had assembled in the long kitchen which aunt Patty used in winter as a setting-room, a storm came up that precluded all hopes of masculine society that evening. The wind howled around the house like an animal eager for its prey; hail and snow rattled against the windows, while the fretful and half whispered moaning of the poplars as they complained to the rough elements, came dismally to our ears.

But what cared we for the storm! There was a blazing pile of hickory crackling cheerily in the great kitchen chimney: and a japan tray filled with luscious red apples stood on the hearth, the fruit mellowing in the warm fire-light. An old China pitcher filled to the brim with cider, occupied one corner, close by the footstool which supported the two plump feet that were peeping from beneath the *cane-colored* skirt of highly pressed flannel which always composed the winter dress of aunt Patty. —

Our joyous company sat around the huge chair so completely filled by the good-natured old maid that a little of the oaken back alone could be seen rising, like a half spread fan, above her broad shoulders. We all had our knitting work, but one or two only were busy with it. Two of the girls were counting apple-seeds and naming them for each other. One was standing up in front of the fire with a foot on the lower round of her chair, winding a skein of stocking-yarn which she had placed on the back, after tiring out a sweet-tempered girl who had been holding it till her arms ached. Another, Lizzy Parks, the most mischievous, talkative, insinuating creature that you ever saw, sat on the dye-tub caressing aunt Patty's cat, who erected her ears at every touch of that slender hand, and gave out a sleepy purr which would have made a less excitable party drowsy to hear. Now and then Lizzy would steal a sly glance at us from under her long eye-lashes, and then fall to caressing the cat again demurely as the animal herself. We knew what was coming and waited the event, for when Lizzy Parks took to conciliating the old maid's favorite, it was a sure preliminary to some request, which was very likely to be refused unless great tact and discretion was exercised in making it.

"Do put those tongs in the fire!" exclaimed Lizzy all at once, lifting puss from her lap, and resting her damask cheek lovingly against its soft fur a moment before she deposited the sleepy animal at aunt Patty's feet. "I declare if it were not for me dear aunt Patty would never get the least attention."

Lizzy thrust the heavy iron tongs into a glowing

bed of embers as she spoke, and then crossing the kitchen to a corner cupboard, she opened the sash door and came forward holding an old fashioned mug of gilded China in one hand and a small wooden box in the other.

She opened the box, took the silver spoon from the cider pitcher, and measuring it even full of ginger dropped it into the mug, and lifting the pitcher began slowly stirring the fluid as it flowed in a stream of liquid amber from one vessel to the other.

"There now for the tongs!" she exclaimed eagerly, shading her pretty face with one hand as she took the red hot implements from the fire and thrust them into the brimming mug. The cider hissed and gurgled for half a minute, the rich fluid rose creaming to the brim till a drop or two run over, then she withdrew the tongs, lifted the mug between her little hands, and held it to aunt Patty's lips.

Aunt Patty had been watching these movements with a pleasant gleam of the eye, and a slight, eager curve of her plump lips that bespoke her interest in the object; and when the beverage was lifted to her mouth, her round face grew bright and rosy in the fire-light. She dropped the knitting-work in her lap, lifted both hands to the mug, and by the rise and fall of her double chin you might have counted every slow and deliberate swallow as she luxuriated at least two minutes in her favorite beverage.

"There girls," exclaimed Lizzy, as aunt Patty drew a deep breath and resigned the half empty mug into her hands. "Pass round the apples once more, and then aunt Patty will tell us about Mr. Smith she saw down in York. This is just the night for it. Everything snug and comfortable, and no danger of the young men dropping in to intercept us."

Aunt Patty shook her head. "No, no, not to-night, the storm is enough to make one melancholy without talking of old times," she muttered.

"Dear aunt Patty there could not be a better time," we all exclaimed, "the storm is just the thing. It makes us enjoy the bright, warm fire a thousand times more than usual. Come now, be good-natured this once, you promised to give us this story about Mr. Smith, and we have waited a long time—remember that."

Still the old maid shook her head.

"I'll settle it, wait a minute," cried Lizzy, dexterously peeling an apple in a way that left the rind one entire chain in her hand: "see, I will fling this over my head, if it falls in an S aunt Patty shall tell us the story about her city lover, if it forms any other letter we will promise not to tease her: will you agree to this all of you?"

"Certainly, yes—yes," we exclaimed all at

once, very willing to stand the test, for as both ends of the rind were curled opposite ways it was next to impossible that any letter except an S could be formed by it.

"And you, aunt Patty," said Lizzy, holding up the crimson rind, and swinging it slowly round her head—"do you agree to it?"

"Yes," said aunt Patty innocently, "out of twenty-four letters I stand a good chance. If it comes an S I'll tell the story."

Before she had done speaking Lizzy swung the apple skin over her head for the third time, and it dropped at aunt Patty's feet a perfect S, and very pretty S.

"Now did you ever!" exclaimed the old maid, bending forward and gazing at the phenomena. "It beats all—who would a thought it!"

"There, I thought how it would be," said Lizzy sententiously, "come, girls, let us all take our knitting-work while aunt Patty begins."

We sat down, gathered our work together, and in a few minutes there was no sound to interrupt aunt Patty in her story save the click of our needles around the hearth, and the storm raging without.

"Well," commenced aunt Patty, thrusting her needle in the crimson sheath at her side, and winding the yarn round her finger: "If you must hear it, the sooner it is over the better: but I never saw such a set of torments in my life—when you take a thing into your heads there is no getting rid of you.

"Well, as I was a saying, it was—let me see—yes, it was the very next summer after my visit to New York when par received a letter from young Mr. Smith, saying that his health had been delicate for some months, and if par would like it he thought of coming up into Connecticut and making his home with us awhile.

"I could hardly breathe while par was reading the letter: when he got through and laid it among his old papers in the desk, I went and took it slyly away and read it over a thousand times before I went to bed. I slept with it in my bosom all that night, but instead of dreaming I lay awake till broad day thinking of him, and almost crazy with the hope of seeing him once more. I don't believe that I had been an hour without thinking of him since my return home, and yet it was with a sort of sorrowful feeling as if I had buried a friend; but now when he was coming—when the paper his hand had touched lay against my heart—you needn't smile, girls, I wasn't half so fleshy as I am now—well, it seemed as if every line was playing over it like flashes of fire, and as if my heart would never beat regularly again. *Did* he come to see me? I kept asking myself that question every ten minutes for a fortnight.

"By and by another letter came—he would be at our house in a few days—I thought I should have died, it made me feel so dreadfully when the time drew near. I began to get anxious about the way we lived, and tried and tried to persuade par into buying some new things for the house, but par was awful sot when he took a notion into his head, and says he every time I mentioned the subject says he,

"Patty, child, don't make a fool of yourself. The house is good enough for your mother and me, and I rather guess it will have to answer for our company. Besides that, Patty, if I were to spend all I'm worth on the old house you could no more make it appear like cousin Smith's than you could make cheese out of chalk. Act natural, Patty—act natural! and if you've a good heart and pretty tolerable common sense, there is no danger but the highest of them will respect you, and a great deal more than if you tried to be what you never was brought up to."

"Well, par would not help me a mite, so I was obliged to get along as well as I could—we put out the dimity curtains to bleach for the bed in our spare room, and I took the skirt to mar's wedding gown, whitened it up and ruffled it round one of our smallest kitchen tables, and set it under the looking-glass, just as I'd seen one at cousin Smith's. Louisa knit new fringe for the window curtains, and without letting par know it I took this great China pitcher—standing here just now with the cider in it—and the punch bowl still in the cupboard yonder, and set them on a little table for Mr. Smith to wash in, for I was afraid he might think we had been brought up in the woods if he had to wash in the stoop and wipe on the roller towel, with the work hands, every morning as we did. I cut off half the piece of hard soap from par's shaving-box, though I knew that he would make an awful noise when he found it out—and set it on the table in one of mar's best saucers, and after I'd covered the table up with our finest home-spun towels, it looked good as new I can tell you. We scrubbed the floor till it was white as snow, and when Louisa had fastened the curtains to her liking, filled the fire-place with white pine and wild honey-suckle branches, and had woven a heap of asparagus all heavy with bright berries among the *curlícues* over the looking-glass, the chamber was nice enough for a king, I can tell you—there was not a speck of dirt from one end to the other, everything was span olean, and as white as a half blown lily—but Louisa always put the finishing touch on everything. While I was taking mar up to see how we had fixed things, she went down into the garden and came in with her apron full of roses to put on the toilet, for that is the name

they give the tables in white dresses down in York.

"Did I ever tell you how dreadful handsome our Louisa was. That day she was all in white, her short-gown was rather coarse, but she had worked a vine down the front, and ruffled it all round. The weather was warm, and it was thrown open at the neck, while the sleeves only came to her elbow, not quite low enough to hide the dimples when she moved her arm. She had set down on the stairs to tie up her roses, and you could see the pink shadows floating over her round arms while she was sorting the flowers from her lap. She had a lot of them, I can tell you, and every time she took up the folds of her dimity skirt and shook the pile together, we could see her two little, naked feet as white as her dress, except that they were just then a little rosy with the heat—for we did not wear stockings in the summer time those days, and Louisa had left her shoes down in the entry as she came in.

"Mar and I stood watching her over the banisters when we heard the gate shut, and somebody coming up the door-yard. Louisa did not seem to mind it at first, but all at once she started so quickly that half the roses went dancing down stairs: she lifted her foot to spring away, then seemed to remember for the first time that she had no shoes on, and sat down blushing all over, and almost crying. The front door was open, and there, as true as I live, stood young Mr. Smith looking right straight at Louisa, and smiling as if he did not guess that she was only our help. I declare I trembled like a leaf, and it seemed as if I should drop when I run to my room and called mar to help me slick up a little.

"By and bye I went down, and there was Louisa setting in the out-room with Mr. Smith, as independent as could be. She had contrived to get her shoes on: but she kept changing color as if something was the matter with her yet.

"I felt awfully. What would Mr. Smith think at the idea of setting there in our out-room so sociable when he come to find out that Louisa was only our help. I could have fainted away right there just as well as not. Mr. Smith seemed very glad to see me. He shook hands with mar and kissed me right before her. You can't think how frightened I was. It seemed as if I should blush myself to death: and there sat Louisa blushing too, I don't know what for, it was no concern of hers!

"It was getting near dinner time, and we had nothing cooked but hashed fish and an Indian pudding, for par had gone off to the upper farm with his work hands, and we had nothing but a pecked up dinner. There was but one work hand near the house, a clever creature as ever

lived, that hung about and did chores for us all the year round. While mar was talking with Mr. Smith I went out—Louisa, she followed me, and then I up and told her a piece of my mind, about her setting down to entertain my company. 'Now,' says I, 'Miss Louisa it is high time that you should learn to know your place. Hired help never think of setting down in the room with company, or even at the table in York,' says I, 'and there is no sense in your setting yourself up to be better than the rest of them.'

"Louisa turned pale, and I saw the tears fill her soft eyes, but they didn't seem to touch my feelings just then, and says I, 'now while Mr. Smith is here you can eat with the work folks, and if we want anything you can run in to help us to it. and then go away again.'

"You have always been kind to me, Patty,' says she, shutting her eyelids quick to break up the tears that were just falling—'I did not expect this, but if you insist on it I will not complain!'

"I began to feel sorry for her, and says I—

"Well, I don't want to be hard with you, only just stay in the kitchen and see to things—perhaps Mike will wait on the table—it is more genteel to have a man after all.'

"So out I went to find Mike; he was swingeing flax in the barn-yard. When I told him what I wanted he sat down on the flax-break and wiped his forehead with his sleeve, and seemed loth to speak out. By and bye says he—

"Well, Patty, I wasn't born to be a servant to servants, or a slave to any one; but seeing as it's you I'll come in and give you a helping hand.'

"So rolling down his sleeves he shook the dust from his clothes, and went round to the well to wash up.

"Louisa had set the table in the out-room: the cloth was like a sheet of snow, and everything looked nice as when she put it on the table. But I could see that she felt bad yet. Her eyes were heavy with tears, and now and then I could see her lip tremble—but I kept saying to my heart, 'what business has she to set herself up? She ought to know her place,' and so I left her pass back and forth without saying a word about any thing but the work.

"Before we sat down to dinner, I went out to see if Mike was ready. He had his jacket on, and had washed himself head and all, till his long hair lay smoothly over his forehead down to his eyes, and water was dropping from the ends every minute.

"Now,' says I, 'Mike, remember and stand behind Mr. Smith's chair: put everything on his plate, and when he stops eating take it away to the corner cupboard and bring a clean one.'

"Just so,' says Mike.

"Now do be careful,' says I, turning back, 'try and be genteel this once, and I'll give you a double bladed knife the first time we send eggs and butter to the store.'

"Never fear me,' says Mike, putting one hand deep in his pocket as if he felt the knife there already.

"I went into the out-room again to see if everything was ready for dinner: Louisa had boiled some fresh eggs and made a sauce for the pudding, and everything looked very genteel considering. There was a plate of hashed fish nicely browned over at one end of the table, with a dish of eggs on one side of it, and a plate of rye bread on the other. In the middle of the table stood the pudding trembling in the dish where it had just been turned from the bag, and breaking open a trifle on one side till you could see its heart as light as a cork and yellow as gold. Around it stood plates of pickles, a little ball of butter stamped on the top with a bird perched on a branch, and notched round the edges, besides preserved plumbs and quinces without end.

"Mike come in and stood looking to see what chair Mr. Smith would take. Mar didn't seem to know what he was there for, and says she—

"Set by and help yourself, Mr. Smith. Make yourself to home while you are here.'

"We sat down to the table all but Louisa, and she went away up stairs and had a good crying spell, I dare say.

"The minute Mr. Smith sat down Mike took his plate and heaped a great pile of fish on it, then he cut an egg through the middle and left it to run over the fish, while he took the same knife and sliced off the largest end of the pudding. There was not room enough on the plate, so he laid the pudding up over the fish and filled the edges with preserves. Then he sat the plate down before Mr. Smith, took up the knife and fork, and while he was crossing them over the plate looked at me and winked one eye as much as to say—

"I rather think that double bladed knife is safe enough this time anyhow.'

"Then he put both hands on the back of our visitor's chair, and stood up behind him, just bending forward a little while he watched Mr. Smith as he put the pudding on one side, and tried to push the pile of fish away from the preserves. My face was in a blaze, for I could see that cousin Smith had as much as he could do to keep from laughing right out—mar, she helped herself as if nothing were the matter. I trod on her foot and made a sign to Mike that he must help us, but she spoke right out—

"Good gracious,' says she, 'Patty how you have hurt my foot,' and Mike, instead of helping

us, thought that I wanted him to do something more for Mr. Smith; so he snatched the knife and fork from his hand, and began to mince up the fish right and left with both elbows squared as if he were raking a flower bed.

"Mike," says mar, 'why on earth don't you get a chair and set to?' for she couldn't tell what to think of his standing that way, so she moved along to make room. Mike shook his head and made faces at her while he minced away at the fish more furiously than ever. At last he pushed the plate back to Mr. Smith and gave me another triumphant look. I really thought I should have died on the spot, and it was as much as I could manage to keep from bursting right out a crying.

"Mike," says I at last, as well as I could speak, 'will you help me to some fish?'

"Well," says Mike, putting his hand into one pocket and deliberating half a minute—"it wasn't exactly in the bargain that I should wait on the women folks too, but if you'll agree to throw in a hand of tobacco with the knife, I won't be particular this once."

"It really was too bad. I burst out a crying in good earnest, left the table and ran up stairs, feeling as if I never could speak to cousin Smith again.

"Toward night par came home with all the work hands. Mike told him who had arrived as he came through the barn-yard, and in he ran without his coat and in his home-spun clothes. I went down stairs to beg him to fix up a little: but Mr. Smith was standing at the back-door, and there were all the workmen round the well, close by, washing together out of the tin wash-hand-basin, and par in the midst—he come up to the stoop, wiped himself on the brown towel, and going up to the door shook hands a full minute with cousin Smith, and, would you believe it, he went right in to supper with the workmen, and set down to a dish of cold pork and beans, just as if the table hadn't been set out for us in the spare room. I declare it hurts my feelings to say it, but Mr. Smith would go in to the kitchen with par and set down to the long table. It was too much: for just then Louisa came down to supper with the hands, and he made room for her between himself and par, and helped her to every thing as genteely as if she had been a York lady. I rather guess I didn't speak to Miss Louisa that night again.

"Well, at last milking time came on, I had always helped Louisa and mar do up the chores, but this time I got my sewing-work and sat down by the window as if I had never seen a cheese-tub in my life. Mr. Smith sat close by me looking out of the window, when he saw Louisa and mar go down the yard with their pails. He smiled

and said as if to himself—"how fresh and pretty." I thought he was thinking aloud about me: the color burned up to my face, and I began to tremble, for we were all alone in the room.

"What fine cows you have," he said at last, leaning over the window sill—"do you go out to milk with your mother?"

"Oh, certainly not," says I, 'we leave such work to our help.'

"I am sorry," says he, taking up his hat, 'the air is so sweet, and everything looks so lovely, I must run away. Your mother has just taken her milking-stool from the fence, I will go and carry it for her.'

"Out he went through the door-yard, and sure enough he did carry mar's stool for her going; but when they all come back he had Louisa's pail foaming over with milk in one hand and her stool in the other. I thought I should have dropped down I felt so dreadfully.

"The next morning mar went up to the kitchen chamber where the loom and wheels were kept. She had a piece of linen in the gears and wanted me to go up and wind quills for her, but I just took her on one side and told her not to think of such a thing, and made her promise that while cousin Smith staid she would never mention house-work to me in his hearing.

"She took Louisa up to help her, and I sewed a pattern to a piece of muslin, and sat down in the out-room with my hair curled and a silver thimble on as if had never done anything but work cuffs in my life. Mr. Smith came into the room, walked up and down awhile, then took a paper and read a little; but he seemed restless all the time, and at last went up to his room, pretending to want something there. He staid and staid till I thought he must have gone to sleep.

"I began to feel rather lonesome and went up to the kitchen chamber to see how mar got on with her weaving. When I got to the top of the stairs, as true as I live, there was cousin Smith standing by Louisa's quill wheel, the skein of tow yarn had got tangled on the swifts and he was bending down to help her sit it to rights. I saw his lips move as if he were saying something; but the loom made such a noise I could not hear a word. Louisa did not seem to answer, but she blushed up to her forehead: there was a soft sparkle in her eyes as the long lashes drooped over them, and a smile just dimpled her lips. I would have given all creation only just to have known what he was saying. I went down stairs again and took up my work, but it was a long time before I took a stitch, I can tell you.

"Well it is of no use telling you all that happened during the four weeks that he staid with

us. Every night he was out in the clover lot standing by Louisa while she did her knitting; he would eat in the kitchen, and read to her half the morning when she was spinning on the little flax wheel, though he was obliged to read very loud to drown the noise of the flyers. I had made him believe that I did not know how to do any kind of work, and so there I sat and in the out-room working on them concerned old cuffs and crying my eyes out.

"One day I went up stairs to ask mar for something. She had gone down to see about dinner, and there was cousin Smith with Louisa all alone in the chamber. He was talking to her very earnestly, she had stopped her wheel, and bending her face close to the spool, pretended to be moving her thread from one hook to another further down the flyer—her hand was so unsteady that she only tangled the yarn, and her little foot shivered on the foot-board till it made the wheel tremble all over. At last she gave him one look, covered her face with both hands, and burst out a crying. Just then cousin Smith saw me.

"Come here, Patty: come, my kind cousin," says he, holding out his hand to me, 'come and convince this sweet girl that my parents have no prejudices such as she dreams of. Tell her how kind and good they are!—how happy they will be to receive her if she consents to go to them as my wife.'

"I gasped for breath, and should have sunk to the floor but for mar's loom which I fell against.

"You can tell her that this desire to make her my wife is no sudden fancy. You, who praised her so much while in New York, and made me love her unseen, cousin, you must plead for me,' as he said this Mr. Smith put his arm around my waist and drew me toward Louisa. She raised her eyes, and a poor frightened looking thing she was. I did not hate her, for my heart was so heavy that it seemed to have no feeling. I said something, I don't know what, and tried to get away down stairs.

"It is of no use telling you any more, girls," said aunt Patty, wiping her eyes with the corner of her immense cambric cape. "You know how it all ended well enough, for all of you saw Mrs. Smith when she was here three years ago—and you are pretty well acquainted with the fact that I am an old maid, I reckon by this time."

There was a kind of sentimental bitterness in these closing words which gave us to understand that aunt Patty had not quite forgiven her mother's help for depriving her of a husband even then—but while we were seeking for some terms of consolation the good lady found it herself. She stooped down, lifted the China mug to her lips,

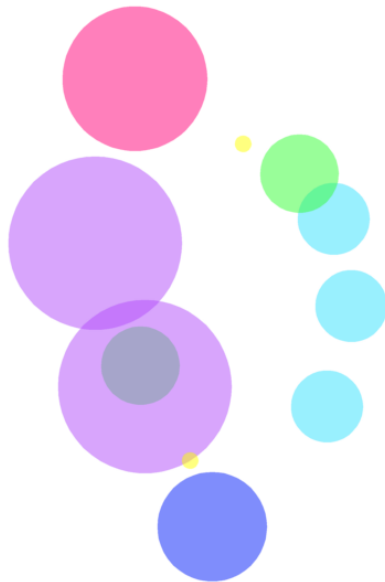
drank heartily, and heaving a profound sigh, uttered this fragment of advice.

"Well, girls, all that I've got to say more about it, is, 'Never be ashamed of knowing how to work. Men that are worth having will not think the better of you for helplessness or ignorance in anything.'"

"And did you never get another offer?" enquired Lizzy, looking roguishly up through eyelashes.

"Yes," said aunt Patty, with a bright twinkle of her little eyes: "Mike offered himself sometime that summer, but I gave him the tobacco and the doubled bladed knife, and that pacified him," and with a low, mellow laugh that shook the chair beneath her, aunt Patty peeped down into the China mug which she still held resting on her lap, shook up the ginger and lifted it to her mouth again.

It was difficult to tell whether the sigh that followed that last draught partook most of regret, for the past, or of satisfaction with the mature comforts which were left to the old maid.





THE DEAD GUEST.

A TALE FROM THE GERMAN OF ZSCHOKKE.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

(Continued from page 8.)

"THE country estate near this town," began the narrator, "that belonged to the late Counsellor Becker, was once owned, as you know, by the baronial family von Rozen, though for the last century it has been farmed out, till about twenty years ago during the war it came into the hands of its late possessor. The last baron who held the property and also some woodland adjoining, was a great spendthrift, and spent much of his youth in Venice and Paris: but finally made his home on this estate, where he lived with his family. There may still be seen traces of his magnificent tastes about the castle and grounds, though the former has been for seventy years a mass of ruins, the owner occupying a modern built dwelling close by; and though the plough now passes over the grounds laid out with such care and expense.

"The last time the baron came to this villa it was toward the close of the year; and he was accompanied by twenty or more of his friends, with their attendants. His daughter was then betrothed to the Vicomte Vivienne, a rich and amiable foreigner, who had come to Germany on court business of Cardinal Dubois. Dubois was the powerful minister of the Duc of Orleans, Regent of France, and had bestowed on Vivienne many marks of his confidence and friendship.

"As may be supposed, Baron von Rozen spared no pains to render the visit of his guests to his country palace near a small town as agreeable as possible. The pleasures of the table, the pleasures of the chase in the neighboring forest, alternated with games of hazard, and theatrical exhibitions. A Count Altenkreuz, the son of a distinguished family in the country of the Lower Rhine, was the leader in all devices for the general entertainment, and his various accomplishments rendered him a most valuable accession to the company. The baron had made his acquaintance shortly before he returned to Herbesheim, and invited him chiefly because he played high, and not always successfully.

"This young and lively guest at length proposed that a masked ball should be given; and that the gentlemen should seek in the town for their partners without regard to birth or station, as there were no ladies at the castle, except the young baroness, the daughter of the host, and a few of her friends. 'For a night of festivity, what avails rank?' asked he: 'let the fairest be queens and princesses, for beauty is the true

aristocracy, and a grisette may be worthy to be partner to a duke.'

"This proposition was generally approved; the night was fixed, and the labors of all the tailors and milliners in the town were in requisition to prepare for the masquerade. The Vicomte de Vivienne, as usual, was determined to surpass the rest, and Altenkreuz to outshine him. The latter sought out the most skilful tailor in Herbesheim, and the fairest lady for his partner. Both were found under the same roof; Master Vogel excelled in his business, and comprehended at once the wishes of the count; his daughter Henriette was in the first bloom of her beauty, and soon saw that she had achieved a new conquest.

"The count was often at the tailor's house, and gave orders for some splendid female apparel, at which Henriette was obliged to work, measuring them by herself, because the count told her father that the lady he was to take to the ball was just her height and figure. He accompanied his directions with several little presents, which the young girl received willingly, of course; neither was she displeased at the flattering compliments to her beauty, which the count lavished on her whenever he found her alone; though as soon as he began to talk of love, she reminded him that she was engaged to an excellent young man, apprenticed to her father's business.

"A few days before the ball, the dresses being already finished, Altenkreuz came somewhat disturbed to the house of Master Vogel, and begged to speak alone with him. 'I am in great embarrassment,' said he, 'and if you will help me out of my present difficulty you shall find it more for your advantage than a year's making of ball dresses.'

"'I am your lordship's most obedient servant!' replied the tailor with a smile and a low bow.

"'Well then, master,' continued Altenkreuz, 'the lady I was to escort to the ball is sick, and will not be able to go. All the other gentlemen have their partners, and most of them, as I know, the daughters of burghers in this town. I could, perhaps, find some one to accompany me; but the dresses—they would not fit! So—master, I must beg you to let your daughter by whom the dresses were measured, go with me. You must entreat her.'

"The tailor had not expected so great an honor. He bowed low, but could find no words to express his pleasure.

"'Henriette,' said the count, 'shall not repent her kindness: the dress in which she dances shall remain her property, and I will add whatever is necessary for her appearance with suitable splendor.'

"Your lordship is too gracious!" cried Master Vogel. "I may say to your lordship without vanity that the girl dances admirably. You should have seen her at the wedding of my neighbor, the pewterer's daughter. Will your lordship remain here a few moments till I speak with my daughter? All shall be arranged according to your pleasure."

"But, Master Vogel," said Altenkreuz, "the lover of Henriette may be jealous; I must propitiate him by a good word."

"Oh," cried the tailor, "the fellow dare not withstand me!"

"In a few moments Henriette came into the room, blushing; the count covered her hand with kisses. He told her of his wish, and entreated that she would supply herself at his expense with everything desirable for making a magnificent display. The girl blushed again when he whispered that she would eclipse all the other ladies in beauty, and requested her acceptance of a pair of splendid ear-rings. As they were alone, Altenkreuz took advantage of the opportunity to declare his passion for Henriette, and to confess to her that he had never had in view any other partner than herself. 'You are too beautiful,' he concluded, 'to be destined for the wife of a tailor: yours must be a higher lot. Must it not, lovely Henriette?'

"The girl did not answer this question, but she promised, if her father consented, to accompany him to the ball. All was thus arranged, and the count at parting slipped a purse of gold into Master Vogel's hand, bidding him spare no expense in her attire.

"The consequence was a scene of dispute in the tailor's house; for Christian, the affianced husband of Henriette, was violently opposed to the proceeding, and neither the tears of the young girl, nor the anger of her father, could bring him to consent. Henriette passed a sleepless night; she was sincerely attached to Christian, but resolved not to lose the opportunity of going to a masked ball, where the most distinguished persons were to be present, and of indulging for once her taste for display. And she could not help believing Christian's affection for her to be less strong than his own pride, since he was willing to deny her so innocent a gratification.

"The next morning Christian was more quiet, but persisted in his opposition. When the day for the ball was close at hand, he prepared himself for a journey, and came with knap-sack in hand, to learn Henriette's final decision. 'If you go to the ball,' said he, 'we part forever,' Henriette grew pale; but her father already displeased with the young man, cried, 'begone, as soon as you will! I will see who is master here! My

daughter can get a husband ten times better than you!' Henriette wept: just then came in a servant of Count Altenkreuz with a casket, which he presented in the name of his master, containing, as he said, a few trifles for the use of Mademoiselle Vogel. Henriette unfolded a magnificent veil, and took out besides a coral necklace, a pair of bracelets, and two costly rings. They almost dazzled her eyes; she wavered between vanity and love.

"You will not go?" cried Christian anxiously.

"I will go!" exclaimed Henriette. "You are not worth weeping for—for you grudge me a harmless pleasure, which shows that you have never loved me."

"Go, then," said her lover, "and break a faithful heart!" He threw down before her her ring of betrothal and left her. The tailor entreated his daughter to shed no more tears for him; and the preparations for the ball, indeed, occupied all her thoughts. On the appointed evening a carriage stopped before the house, and the count came to conduct his partner. 'Ah, Henriette!' he whispered, as he placed her in the carriage, 'you are lovelier than ever; you are a divinity! For such magnificence were you born, and not for a low condition.'

"The ball was splendid beyond description. Altenkreuz and his fair partner appeared in old German costume; and by their magnificence drew all eyes upon them. Their dresses surpassed even those of the Vicomte de Vivienne and the young baroness, who figured in Persian costume.

"The man is no other than the count," said the vicomte to his betrothed; 'it is useless for him to wear a mask! for he cannot hide his pale figure, towering as it does a head higher than any the rest. Then I know well the black dress in which this knight of the rueful countenance always appears, looking like a gloomy monk. But I am all curiosity to know who is his partner. Certainly, she has a fine bosom, and dances to perfection.'

"I will venture," said the baroness, 'that it is some low person from the city. Look at her awkward movements, and air of constraint.'

"The dancing continued till very late; and then the company went to supper, at which it was customary to lay aside the masks. The gentlemen were surprised and delighted at the sight of so many new and beautiful faces. The vicomte could not take his eyes from the bewitching countenance of the lady in old German costume, who sat at the table beside him; and Altenkreuz appeared as much devoted to the young baroness. The two, in fact, seemed to have changed places; and this continued even after supper.

"I shall certainly steal away your partner," said Vivienne to the count.

"And I shall have my revenge, dear vicomte, in stealing away your lovely baroness!" returned Altenkreuz. The vicomte, carried away by his new fancy, and the old wine of which he had drank so freely, was imprudent enough to say, without noticing that the baroness stood near—"I would give a dozen of my baronesses for one Venus such as this of yours!"

"Nay, vicomte," said the count, "be careful of what you say. However graceful and winning my partner, you know that the prize of beauty is due always to the queen of this festival—your affianced bride!"

"A titular queen!" exclaimed Vivienne: "I go for real power!" And unmindful of the count's looks and signs to him to be cautious of his words, he went on in the same mad strain till the baroness, offended, walked away. Altenkreuz insisted that the vicomte should follow, and apologize to her; Vivienne refused, and thus words were exchanged, in which the vicomte lost his temper, while the count preserved admirable coolness. But when Vivienne cried, "that he could not expect to provoke such a dried pole to jealousy, for that he had not enough life in him to feed so strong a passion"—the count no longer controlled himself.

"What mean you," he asked, "by this insult?"

"Your own chalkface bears witness to the truth of what I say!" retorted the vicomte.

"If you are not a coward," said the count, "you will render me satisfaction for this to-morrow morning. One of us must quit this house. You are a hair-brained sot."

"Baron von Rozen who had met his daughter in tears, and learned from her the discourteous language of the vicomte, sought him out, and came up in time to hear the count's last words. He said apart to Vivienne—"you have, sir, offered an open affront to my daughter; you must give me satisfaction, not to-morrow morning—but *this instant!*" So saying, he led the way to an adjoining apartment, followed only by the count, for the others had not heard his challenge. Altenkreuz had two swords, one of which he handed to the vicomte, and turning to the baron, begged permission to avenge his own insult and that of the baroness at one and the same time.

"Draw, then! chalkface!" cried the vicomte in a fury: and drawing his sword he flung away the sheath and rushed upon his foe. The encounter lasted not three minutes, when Vivienne's weapon was struck out of his hand with such violence that it flew against the wall, and was shivered into fragments.

"Your life is in my power!" cried the count; "but I will not stain my hands with your blood. Away, and return to this place no more!" So saying, he thrust him with violence out of the door. The vicomte immediately left the castle with his attendants.

The young baroness, though vexed at the slighting language used by Vivienne, was fully consoled by the éclat of having swords drawn for her. She had, in truth, never loved the vicomte; and now she thought the count much handsomer and more agreeable. It was from her father she learned the particulars of the duel, which happily proved bloodless; and thinking it graceful to affect terror, she asked breathlessly if Altenkreuz were wounded.

"I have no wounds, dearest lady," whispered the count, "save those your beauty has made in my heart."

"Flatterer! we all know you are heart-whole."

"Nay—I have suffered in silence; I would die for you, lady!"

"Better dance with me!" said the baroness, smiling. But she repelled not the avowal whispered in her ear during the intervals of the dance.

Meanwhile Henriette was enraptured with all she saw; never in her life had she beheld so much splendor, or seen so many noble-looking gentlemen. When the count next morning took her back to her father's house, she expressed the pleasure she had received; and Altenkreuz pressing her hand, replied—"ah, Henriette, it depends on yourself to have your life pass as happily as the last night. It will be all a festival to you as Countess of Altenkreuz."

The count was soon the favored admirer of both the young girls; to both he gave splendid presents, and flattered both so successfully that each felt for him a real attachment. And he found means to make the baron as well pleased with him as the tailor; having already secured his good will by losing to him large sums of money. Ere long he proposed to each maiden, was accepted by, and betrothed to both.

The baron celebrated the betrothal of his daughter with a grand entertainment and ball. The count obtained an invitation for Henriette, and asked permission of the baroness to fetch her himself to the castle. It was a day of storm, rain and sleet; the wind blew in fearful gusts; but the grand hall, splendidly illuminated, looked the more brilliant from the contrast with cold and darkness without; and the feast was sumptuous, and mirth and festivity reigned.

The unconscious rivals, the baroness and Henriette, were happy beyond imagination. Both were adorned with jewels presented by the count, and he danced frequently with both. The baroness

particularly, was absolutely radiant, and could not help fancying herself the object of universal sway, as the destined bride of the richest count in Germany. Being fatigued, she retired early from the ball; Altenkreuz attended her to the corridor, where they found one of her women, and, notwithstanding that she begged he would not take the trouble, led her, leaning on his arm, into her sleeping apartment. When he returned the assembly was breaking up. He handed Henriette to the carriage and accompanied her home. The house was all still; they opened the door quietly; the count had ordered the coachman to drive back, and followed Henriette.

"The next day there was a rumor about the town that the daughter of a person in office had been found dead in bed with her neck twisted. Great alarm was occasioned by this report; doctors and policemen flocked to the house; and amid the universal horror it was remembered what a terrible event had taken place in Herbesheim, precisely in Advent—an hundred years before. All thought upon the Dead Guest.

"Master Vogel heard what had taken place, and was uneasy with respect to his daughter, though he had felt no surprise at her sleeping so late after the fatigue of the ball. But when he heard the mysterious guest described as a tall, thin man, with pale face and black dress, and thought how precisely Count Altenkreuz answered the description, his hair seemed to stand on end. Still he disbelieved the story, and was far from being superstitious; so he resolved to fortify his spirits by a cup of the fine wine the count had sent him a short time before. What was his surprise to find it had vanished altogether!

"Alone and with trembling steps he ascended to Henriette's chamber, and softly opened the door. He went up to her bedside—she lay there dead, her fair face turned backward! The bereaved father stood, struck, as by a thunderbolt. At last he raised her head and turned it to its natural position; then, without knowing what he did, ran for a physician. The doctor came, looked at the corpse, and shook his head; while the father, unwilling that the terrible truth should be known, talked of her being overheated at the ball, and exposure in the storm on her return, as the cause of her sudden death. All the neighbors, hearing his lamentations, came to the house; and the whole town was in excitement about the fate of the two unfortunate maidens, when news came of the sudden death of the only daughter of the Baron von Rozen. The physicians who returned from the castle asserted, indeed, that she had come to her death in consequence of over-fatigue and exposure, afterward to the cold night

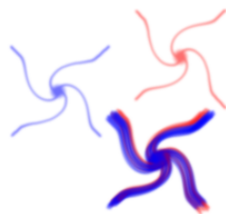
air; but who could believe them? All were convinced that the young baroness had shared the fate of the others, and that the attendants had been bribed by the baron to conceal the truth.

"Thus was this noble mansion changed from the abode of mirth and joy to a house of mourning; and the unhappy father left inconsolable. His horror was increased by the discovery that all the jewels and other rich gifts presented by the count to his daughter, as well as all the money he had won from him at play, had disappeared. The count himself was nowhere to be found; his chamber was as if it had never been occupied.

"On the same day the corpses of the three betrothed maidens were borne to the place of burial; and entered the church-yard at the same time. While the priests were reading prayers over them, it was noticed that one of the mourners, wrapped in a dark mantle, walked away from the procession; and presently the same figure was seen, a few paces off, in a strange, old fashioned dress, white from head to foot, with a white plume in his hat. On his doublet were three crimson spots, from which the blood slowly trickled down. He walked to the corner of the church-yard and disappeared. While horror crept over those who witnessed this scene, the pall-bearers were seized with a panic on finding the coffins, which they lifted to deposit them in the graves, suddenly become as light as if they contained nothing. In great fear they dropped them in, and filled up the graves with all possible haste; then all the people hastened back to the city, in the midst of a violent storm.

"A few days after, Baron von Rozen quitted his estate, to which none of his family ever returned. The gardens and grounds became a wilderness; the castle remained uninhabited and deserted, till it was at last consumed by fire."

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)





THE GREEK MAIDEN.

BY MARY V. SPENCER.

It was a summer afternoon, and the murmur of bees came drowsily to the ear. The light wind scarcely stirred the leaves, and the sea heaved up and fell lazily. On a bold promontory, overlooking the Ægean, sat a Greek maiden, her eyes now straining across the distant waters, and now watching the narrow mountain road which led up to the summit where she stood, as if on the look out for some one, but uncertain by what way he would approach. At length her eyes caught sight of an athletic form bounding up the rocks, and in the splendid costume of his race she recognized her long looked for lover.

"You have come at last, my life," she said, in the passionate language of the east, embracing him, "never to leave me again, I hope."

"Would God it were so," he answered sadly, "but while our native soil is profaned by the foot of a Turk, every true Greek must be up and in arms. Pray heaven, love, that this scourge may be over soon, and then we can be happy."

Tears filled the maiden's eyes, but she knew her lover was inflexible; and indeed how could she ask him to desert his country's cause, even if he would consent.

"I have watched for you, day by day, from this spot, but I forget every anxiety now that you are here. Let us to the house, for you look weary."

"I am indeed so," was the reply. "It was through a thousand perils I reached you, for the whole lower country swarms with the enemy, and I had more than one narrow escape."

The maiden started in alarm.

"What if they should track you here?" she said, with tremulous tones.

"Oh! there is no danger of that," said her lover, reassuring her. "I eluded them too adroitly, and they are now looking for me on the other side of the plain. But let us to the house."

It was one of those mountain homes where alone security could be found during the late struggle of the Greeks for freedom; and when the young soldier entered its neat walls, he felt a sense of security that had been a stranger to him, in that wild and predatory warfare, for months. The family consisted only of the aged father and mother of the maiden; and their delight to see him was only equalled by that of the daughter. So all were happy; and as they sat around the evening meal, they forgot for awhile even the wrongs of their country, and pictured years of happiness in the future yet in store for them.

The sun was just setting, and the young Greek and his mistress had walked to the door, to see the blue Ægean smiling under his departing beams, when suddenly the noise of a rock tumbling headlong, as if dislodged from some neighboring spot and dashing down the precipice, attracted the quick ear of the lover. He looked hurriedly around. The head of a Turk was just rising above the level of the rock, and immediately two or three other turbans were seen following him as he sprang on the little plain where the dwelling stood.

"We are betrayed," he cried, "secrete yourselves in the house, or seek some spot for concealment. The enemy are on us."

He drew his yatagan as he spoke, and, at the same instant, the enemy recognizing him sprang forward with loud shouts.

"This way," eagerly said the maiden, "they are too many for you. Fly, oh! fly," she exclaimed agonizingly, as he hesitated, "we have a sure place of refuge if we can only gain it unseen."

Her lover cast a bitter glance at the foe as he counted the overwhelming numbers, and then reluctantly yielded and with quick steps followed his mistress into the house. Her parents had already disappeared. Hastening through the back door, she led her lover into a small grove of trees and in a few minutes stood before the mouth of a cave, completely concealed from sight by the thick underwood growing over it. Here they took refuge.

For half an hour the fugitives remained in their retreat, though the lion heart of the young Greek chafed to hear his enemies so near, and he unable to strike a blow. At length the sound of their voices died away. Many minutes now were suffered to elapse; but finally the young soldier insisted on going forth to see if the enemy had departed. His mistress begged him to wait longer, and her entreaties for awhile prevailed, but when another half hour had elapsed he cautiously left the cave.

With trembling anxiety they waited his return, and every minute seemed an hour to the maiden. At length even her parents admitted that his absence was unexpectedly long, and could not conceal their fears. The daughter would listen to no entreaties, but insisted on leaving their retreat to ascertain the cause of his absence, and notwithstanding her mother's prayers finally set forth.

What a scene presented itself to her eyes as she emerged to the open air. The night had set in, but the whole heavens were illuminated with a lurid glare, which her heart told her, even before she approached it, came from her burning

home, once so happy, and where she had fondly hoped to spend her wedded life. But a greater sorrow than the destruction of the roof under which she had been born was before her. In vain she searched everywhere for her lover. The little plain, on which the house stood was circumscribed at the most, and a few minutes was sufficient for a thorough search in every part of it; but nowhere was her lover to be found. With tearful eyes and fainting heart she approached at last the edge of the precipice, where the enemy had first appeared. She almost fainted when her eyes met the broken yatagan of her lover, and saw the ground wet with large drops of blood and dented with hurried footsteps as if a deadly struggle had taken place there. She sank on the rock, and leaning her head on her hands, while large tears rolled quick and fast down her cheeks, looked across the darkened sea, over which the still burning embers of her father's house threw a fitful glare. All at once her eye fell upon a sail. It was that, she felt, in which her lover, if alive, was being borne away into captivity, and burying her face on the rock she gave way to convulsive sobbings.

Oh! the first sorrow of the young and innocent heart. How it crushes the soul, and makes us wish for death. Long wept the helpless maiden, her only thought being that life was now worthless and that it would have been better if she had not been born. It would, in that moment, have been a relief to her to have found the corpse of her lover, for she could then have enjoyed the melancholy satisfaction of paying it the last rites of sepulture; but now, that it was not here, she knew he was a prisoner, and reserved, perhaps, for the dreadful death of impalement.

Long she wept there hysterically. Once or twice she looked up, but her eyes were so blinded with tears that she could see nothing but a dim waste before her; and when she fixed her gaze on the spot where the sail had been it was not there.

"It has vanished in the gloom," she murmured, "and I shall never see him more. Would that I were dead!"

The terrible conviction was more than she could endure, her weak nerves gave way, and she fainted. Ah! wisely does heaven, when our sorrows become too great for endurance, fling the veil of insensibility over them.

Morning dawned heavily and slowly, and on that now desolate promontory, the weeping parents watched over their dying daughter. The dreadful shock had destroyed her, and during the night she had passed from one fainting fit to another. The agonized hearts of her parents

almost broke to see her sufferings, and as they watched over her couch on the hard rock—for the conflagration had left them no better repose—the tears fell thickly from their eyes.

"I shall meet him soon, dearest mother," said the poor girl faintly, as the day began to break. "They cannot separate us in heaven. His sufferings too will soon be over——"

"Do not talk so," said her sobbing parent. "He may yet escape, and all of us be happy. Oh! it breaks my heart to hear you."

The sufferer smiled faintly, but she shook her head. A silence of several minutes now ensued, broken only by the half stifled sobs of the mother.

"Hark!" suddenly said the maiden, "I hear a footstep—oh! God, can it be?" she said rising, with flushed cheek and eager eyes, "surely it is his—yet no! it cannot, cannot be," she added plaintively.

All started up and listened intently. A step was certainly approaching, though the darkness that preceded the dawn prevented them from seeing any one. Suddenly a form emerged from the shadows, and with a quick cry of joy, they recognized him whom they had thought a prisoner.

"Are you indeed alive. Oh! heavenly father, be praised," said the now reviving girl, flinging herself on her lover's bosom; while the parents lifted up their eyes to their Creator and poured forth deep prayers for his providential return and for the life of their child, which they now felt was restored to them.

As soon as the mutual agitation had somewhat subsided, the young Greek narrated the circumstances which had befallen him since he left the cave. He had, as they supposed, fallen into the hands of the Turks, and been threatened with death for not revealing the retreat of his mistress, whom they had seen with him on their first appearance. But, finding him immovable, they resolved to bear him off. Luckily, a few miles at sea, they had met with a Greek cruiser and been captured, when, taking a light skiff, the young soldier had hastened back to assure his mistress of his safety and undertake her protection in their now homeless state.

In one of the prettiest vallies of Greece, amid embowering vines and wild flowers loaded with fragrance, stands a neat dwelling, and there, the toils and perils of war long past, the hero and heroine of our story now reside, surrounded by a family of lovely children. But often, in the gathering twilight, the father, that they may appreciate the blessings of the peace their beautiful country now enjoys, rehearses the story of that eventful night.



MILTON'S DREAM.

BY MISS H. B. MACDONALD.

It is the noon of a summer's day. The sky clear, cloudless, intensely blue—Italian as it was. A faint breeze rippling along the Mediterranean waters, is borne like a breath of life over the scorched and drooping foliage of a mulberry grove, which thinly skirted the shores of a Florentine bay. A young man who had for some time been wandering beneath the trees, apparently overcome by heat and fatigue, laid himself down on the shaded turf and gave way to sleep: his face is delicately fair with that pure rose-colored tint of complexion—like a woman's; his fair hair parted above the brow, hangs down in long ringlets over his manly neck and muscular shoulders. So faultless his features, so symmetrical his form, that it might have been mistaken for that of Adonis reposing upon a Tyrian bank of flowers.

What dreams are passing over thy soul beautiful youth? to make the expression shed from thy features so utterly divine? Are they of fairies, of moonlight, of flowers; are they of romance, of beauty and of song? or fairer than all—are they of love?—that Eden of the soul's early bliss before ambition and avarice break like dark spirits upon its domain, to chase away its visions of delight. Or are thy thoughts of fairer worlds, where blight is not upon the beautiful, nor fading comes upon the dreams of eternal love? Do radiant forms throng around thee, as ever above the Patriarch of old, in high lessons for thy youth, pointing thy path to heaven, whereto from thy earthly pillow thy spirit may speed its way upward on the steps of Faith, Mercy and Truth? Happy wilt thou so learn, or perchance vow for the first time art thou visited by dim glimpses, visionary gleams of that divine emanation of thy soul, that master work of thy maturer and more solemn years, when in perfect beauty it sprung from thy creative hands a wonder and a joy for the world and its future ages. "Of man's first disobedience," and of HIM who urged the hapless one to his fate—that majestic spirit wavering with the Omnipotent—that son of the morning, who, with all his compeers, fell from his starry place to dwell in the abyss of eternal shame. Do shadowings of that fiery gulf already flit before thee, with its chained tenants rolling in the crimson flames after their great fall, with the slowly returning consciousness of all their woe?—or seest thou a gleam of that golden pillared pile, that vast Pandemonium where the ten thousand thousand councilled spirits sat with their dark sovereign on his high and jewelled throne

in consultation against the Most High? or HIM with his majestic spear flying triumphant through the domains of chaos and old night? or that happy seat watched over by the morning stars, where earth's first fair creatures walked happy and free, with love and harmony all around them. Or perchance now by the darkening of thy brow thou gazest on the dark side of the picture, of the temptation, the ruin, the exile, the woe. But lo! a change comes over thy dream, and thou art reclining on a bank of flowers beneath a golden fruited tree, as if embowered in some isle of far Hesperides. Thou art reclining upon rose leaves whereon some irresistible sense of delight enchains thee, like a strong power rendering thy limbs incapable to stir. Suddenly a brightness appears in the zenith above, the clearness of the noon, and an indistinct moving radiance is seen wending its way swiftly toward the earth. Gradually it resolved itself into a golden chariot driven by those azure doves—and he knew it was a vision of the goddess of love vouchsafed to him who had ever been a votary of her own. Myriads of cupids and the linked graces hand in hand flew round the car, but she who sat within—how surpassing far aught of human or divine his poet imagination had ever conceived of before! What locks! what lips! what eyes! what wavy lines of loveliness in every motion, in every trait! but of a cast of beauty less known as peculiarly attributed to the Cytherean goddess, as that pertaining to the characteristic style of Italy; the hair was twined round the brow in raven braids, dark eyes gleamed from beneath jetty fringes, and a slight, a scarcely perceptible tinge of olive was visible over the cheek, which when relieved by the faint, ever waxing, ever waving blushes thereon, gave it the hue of a ripening pomegranate. Nearer comes the vision bending over him with eyes of love. He would have given worlds to spring, to fly toward it, but some resistless power enchained his limbs making every effort vain: he strove, he panted, he gasped—suddenly a strain of singing warbled from the lips of his fair visitant, and lulled anew his every sense of joy.

"Tis sweet to wander in the rosy air
Shed from Aurora's incense dropping chair.

At noon in diamond water
'Tis sweet amid the river lilies' wave,
In mood luxurious, brow and limb to lave,
Like some bright Naiad daughter.

'Tis sweet when evening's purple shadows throng,
To watch the rich plumed birds with silver song

Their bright path homeward winging;
'Tis sweet to view the stars with changeless part,
Like dear familiar eyes around the heart
Their light forever flinging.

Yet sweeter far to watch with bending eyes,
Like some rich goddess of thy destinies

Forever *thee* above,
Down showering blessings o'er thy graceful head,
Bidding thee learn of all rich gifts bespread
That earth hath none like love!"

The song ceased, the heavenly visitant bending over him, dropped a kiss on his brow, light and instantaneous as a fairy's footfall upon a yielding rose, and slowly disappeared. The music of that farewell kiss broke his slumbers: yet long after did he gaze with his face upward as if still beholding what with loathing consciousness he was compelled to feel was but an unsubstantial dream. He rose languidly, there was but the same quiet sunshine, the same low bugle hum of the insect world—the shadows, the silence, and the noon. With what disgust did his senses turn toward them? Youth has but one such awakening! when it passeth from the inner world of its own soul, haunted *as it is* by the indwelling spirits of love and its faith, and its hope, to enter upon the theatre of that actual, where love and faith and hope are deemed of *only* as but a dream—which yet with all the scorn wherewith our voices—attuned to that of the crowd—would seek to brand it with all we would give life to buy back again.

Milton, for it was none other than he, suddenly rose—what chases the languor from his eye? the sadness from his brow? Why looks he so joyful? Turning toward the trunk of the giant tree upon whose roots he had slumbered, he read distinctly carved on the golden rind.

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Shed from Aurora's incense dropping chair.
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Like some rich goddess of thy destinies
Forever *thee* above,
Down showering blessings o'er thy graceful head,
Bidding thee learn of all rich gifts bespread
That earth hath none like love."

Here was the improvisation which had rolled through his dream in such melodious numbers as breathed from the lips of his heavenly visitant. Here it was word for word, no unsubstantiality after all; might they not have there been previously traced, and being viewed in a half slumbering state so inspired his dream. No, if it had been thus he could not have failed to discover it, besides it bore the marks of having been recently traced, and the thin juice of the bark ran greenly over the words: he read them, he repeated them, he kissed them till his tears ran over with excess

of joy: here was something more than a vision: engraving letters on a tree was too substantial an experiment for the ethereal fingers of Jove's foam born daughter; besides on examining he discovered the very well defined, the very tiny print of a foot on the pebbly beach near, whereon I question very much if Venus's ærial feet would be guilty of anything so gross or so corporeal. The foot print! here was a cue, he would follow it more devoutly than ever did Theseus in the labyrinth, poor Ariadne's blue worsted thread. In the first place what could be gathered from the foot-print itself? That it was that of a woman was pretty clear by its size, that it was that of a high born woman was equally clear according to some of our opinionists, by its very small dimensions; by its well shaped and critically turned contour it was no less evident that it belonged to a handsome woman; and by the exceeding lightness of the impression on the sand could one doubt that its possessor was any other than spiritual and youthful; here was a woman, a young woman, an aristocratic woman, a handsome woman all conjured up out of an innocent foot-print. Truly young poet, thine ideal faculties were in that hour under their planet's brightest influence! On and follow thy cue!—on went the undeviating foot-marks—on along the pebbly shore; on followed Milton with brightening eye and quickening steps, thinking of Venus on the Carthage sea strand, yet in the consciousness of feeling very much disappointed should his goddess turn out any other than a flesh and blood goddess after all. Softly!—alas, faithless cue!—the foot-prints have on a sudden disappeared; and fast stands the youth bewildered as a hunter off the track of his trail. Toward the sea which washed its very marge, the sward now sloped greenly and smoothly leaving not a trace behind. He stooped down and kissed the very flowers with which it was covered, as if wooing them to tell where her presence had passed by; but in the opening of a glade at a little distance to the right he discovered something like a path, and hastily bent his steps toward it; he found upon pursuing it that he was entering the pleasure grounds of some of the Florentine nobility: the white pinnacles of a chateau glimmered above the foliage, and he caught the glance of statues through the trees; but this was nothing to the purpose if the foot-prints were not forthcoming, and he felt at a loss whether to go forward or retire. He went on. The path was hard and unimpressionable, still he followed it under the trees till he came to a grotto surrounded by tastefully arranged parterres, and with bold footsteps he entered. It was deliciously cool and dim after the golden

glare of the noonday sun, and he flung himself down to repose. Suddenly a manuscript volume thrown carelessly among some freshly gathered flowers, attracted his attention. He took it up and read at the opening page.

FIRST LOVE.

"Mid birds and flowers when young life newly glows
We wander forth, while brightening their array
Some radiant presence glides upon our way,
Melting us in love—languor, as it throws
Around its momentary loveliness,
And then is gone for aye—far borne to be
Upon some differing path of destiny;
Yet ever afterward with the impress
Of its too brief, too beautiful excess
To haunt our souls amid their hopes, their fears,
Their joys, their destiny of future years;
While on that early vision of the past
We look back faithfully, 'mid blinding tears,
To own that earliest love, our all, our last."

They seemed to have been recently written, and were subscribed "Julia." Upon revolving these along with the events of the day, can we wonder if Milton was seized with some sweet questionings whether he had not fortunately wandered into, and now found himself involved in some of the beautiful mysteries of fairy land. His vision of the forenoon he thought of as a dream within a dream; the palpable writing on the tree—could he doubt that it was unconnected with it?—the foot-prints on the sand—the pathway—the grotto and the effusion now before him were all links of the same chain. He had doubtless been watched in his sleep by some songful dryad or nymph of the streams, who had been captivated by his beauty, and thus chose to reveal her love. He was revelling in these sweet fancies when the entrance of foot-steps broke upon his reverie—they were those of Thomas Elwood, his friend and the companion of his travels—and Pescara, an Italian. "Lo, John Milton, it is thou! how in the name of all the angels art thou here? with myself and our comrade Francisco Pescara wearying ourselves to find thee through Florence and half Tuscany, despatched as we were to pleasure the Comtessa Rinaldo, the three young Marchesse Rimini—fairer flowers than ever grew out of the seventh heaven. And all the bellessime of the city whose will it is that every nook, cranny and crevice be rummaged for thee as thou wert another elixir of love."

"Yes," said Pescara, "there is festival in the Conde Rinaldo's to-night, and hearing of your arrival on our fair shores, they have sent to bid thee, thou art to be the planet of the night—a western star upon whose propitious appearance above our horizon the elect of the land are come to gaze."

"Peace your prating, good youths, I go not to Rinaldo's to-night."

"Nay, but thou dost," said Elwood, "thou art at this present in the Conde's domain, and in close vicinage of the palace. Heaven knows how thou camest hither, for sure I am thy dreamy brains, guess not of the matter."

"Nay, then, I go with you," replied Milton, who seemed suddenly to have changed his mind, "I go if that nearest is the palazzo Rinaldo, art thou assured it is so?"

"Assured—we are from the city, on our way thither, and despairing of thy companionship to the festival, we were fain to go alone; up gallant, speed thee, the music is begun."

The day-light was fast fading away as the young men left the bower from which they proceeded by an olive shaded path, till they suddenly came in full view of the palazzo, where a gorgeous spectacle presented itself. Standing in the centre of the wide lawn rose the stately pillars of the palace with its white marble portico, whereon was reflected the blaze of a hundred differently colored lamp lights suspended there, as well as within the balconies and arcades, and which seemed amid the dark trellised foliage like rainbow jewels in masses of midnight air. Amid the boughs of the surrounding trees seen glimmering over the lawn as far as the eye could reach, were disposed similarly lighted lamps, whose gleam displayed human beings in every variety of costume and attitude, grouped upon the open sward, and under the twilight shadow of the trees: the stair-case leading to the palace was also covered with the revellers, and the open latticed halls within, and the balconies, where the silken curtains waved above them, and the night flowers blew at their feet as lovers interchanged vows, or some lighter-hearted dame came to bandy jests with her stately cavaliers. The music played at intervals, and Milton could not help feeling in his soul the full force of that luxury which is the poetry of riches.

A universal passion is this love of gold, and we wonder not that it should be thus; it is power to the ambitious, it is furnishing to the ostentatious of his gaudy splendor. To avarice it is the light of his eyes—him that wakeful griffin, who forsakes life and its endearments, heaven and its hopes for that glittering heap, till the summons which none may resist called from its lingering vigil, the unwilling spirit of this deformed of nature—away as it goes like the spirit of the beast which goeth downward. But surely in its least objectionable form is this passion manifested as ministering to the love of the beautiful in our nature. As some one remarks of a celebrated modern edifice, that it is "a romance in stone and lime," so may we deem of those elegant creations of luxury where out of the

material of coined gold, the mind in the embodiment of its graceful dreams raises its design of art and taste—a palpable incarnation of the beautiful—a material poem.

Milton and his companions pressed forward to join the revellers. The Comtessa Rinaldo, a dazzling beauty of midway life, in dulcet tones welcomed the poet d'Inglese to her Florentine saloons, to which he but coldly replied, for his thoughts were of the vision of the forenoon, and he looked around as if half expecting its embodiment in some of the graceful groups that wandered to and fro through the halls. He was joined by a young lady—one of the haughty Marchesse Colonna.

"How flourish the island exotics, signor, in this our atmosphere of sunshine and delight?" enquired the lady, unbending her marble brow.

"Blandly bellissima," replied Milton, "when it is laden with such smiles as I see around me to-night."

"We are bound to lavish our best upon such, seeing they are like the aloe bloom, but once to be beheld in a hundred years."

"It is too warm," said Milton with a smile, as if rebuking the extravagance of the compliment.

"Shall we adjourn then to the balcony?" replied the lady, choosing to apprehend his words in the literal signification, "where the evening air blows cool." And the poet suffered himself to be led listlessly like one whose thoughts were everywhere save in the subject before him; he was beginning sadly to doubt that his dream, the expectation of some sort of fulfilment for which had led him hither—should at all find itself revealed on the present occasion.

"It marvelleth thee not," said the lady, resuming the subject of the apparently dropped conversation, "though the warmth for me were overweening, seeing I stand beneath the influence of such a star."

"The stars are very cold."

"When in distance seen," said the marchess, "as they ever are by us inferior intelligences, yet when descending from their heaven to visit these lowlier spheres, would it not seem as bearing danger for its dwellers, even as befel the mortal who suffered the blandishments of the god; but as I have no ambition for such a doom for myself I shall be compelled to rid you of me and bestow you upon my fairest cousin, the Countess Guilia, whom I observe watching me with envious eyes."

"Guilia!" cried Milton, whose heart leaped at the name, "where?—where?" and he disappeared from the marchesa's side.

"Is the man moon struck?" said she, as Milton was observed moving toward the supposed direction of her cousin.

"He has certainly been educated among the polar bears, or he is in love, or under the influence of some equally unlucky destiny; but poor youth, he is a poet born, which every one knows to be a circumstance more productive of unhappy effects than either. So I'll think no more about him, except when wishing to value myself upon the number of natural curiosities the path of my life has been fortunate to come across." And the marchesa accepting the arm of some cavalier near her, disappeared among the revellers.

Milton meanwhile proceeding in pursuit of the being whose name as being that affixed to the lines in the grotto, and whose figure by the hurried glimpses which he caught of it, he recognized as bearing a strong resemblance to the heroine of his vision, came to a gallery of statues where few of the revellers lingered to admire; for the ideal objects of loveliness with which he was surrounded, Milton had at present equally little regard. He passed the Antinous in his drooping grace like the stately sweep of a bending willow; the Apollo with his gloriously curved nostril and his arm as it relaxed from the bending of the Pythian bow; Harpocrates in his marble silence; and the rigid, almost convulsed strength of the Mythrias as he tamed the prostrate bull. The voluptuous lines of an undraped Venus beside the matron dignity of a Ceres, the aged and uncouth beauty of a sedge crowned Silenus, beside the transparent grace of a half clad nymph of the streams. He passed them all till he came to a recess where the light reached dimly, and his eyes accustomed to the glare reflected from the lustrous marbles, distinguished not immediately the outlines of the exquisite statue enshrined there apart from the others. It was one of Diana, with her silver crescent, and the cold beauty of her almost severe, though exquisitely modelled form. He could not help thinking as he gazed upon the graceful sweep of her curtailed draperies, that they were a shade less marmorial than the others which surrounded him. The hand too as it grasped the bow looked wonderfully flexible; it seemed so venous, so colored, so soft, he was almost tempted to take it up and kiss it. Carrying his scrutiny to the face—he gazed on it for a moment, uttered a cry of joy, and fell down like a worshipper—it was the same that had visited his dream.

"Rest thee there youth," said a soft and silvery voice which to his excited imagination seemed like the shadowy music of the mystic Memnon, "rest thee there youth, the luxury of worship is for such as thee, that which gives to love that one and true divinity, and to beauty his manifested and tangible form, can only at this altar find the satisfactory reward for all the priceless

wealth, the overflowing of thy rich nature thereon would lavish so well. Yet love herself hath many a false form—doth set herself up in many an idol image to fascinate and delude, of her worshippers the unthinking and the unwary: yet thou wilt not be one of these, neglecting the heaven and choosing the earth, thine eyes upon the clay poring for the glow worms with the eternal stars above thee. Will thy soul find its bliss in the evanescent beauty of flesh and blood, and the love which it inspireth more evanescent still; nay, let thine adoration go forth toward that loftier, that beauty as it is manifested in the divine creation of God, in plain, in river, in cataract, in the gorgeous wilderness of sunset cloud—in the rainbow dyes of the morning; in the history of His providence and sublime dealings with man; in the contemplation of the human mind, its wonderful constitution, its implanted creative power by which it conceives of and executes works than the Creator's own, hardly less divine. Let thy soul go forth toward these; contemplate them, worship them, make them the study of thy life, and be a high priest of nature—a poet, the most glorious calling to which the sovereign will can invoke his creatures below. And oh! as thou worshippingst let the love of woman not be forgotten—that homage which thou givest to the mind, to the heart, to the inward grace breathing outward, as thou wouldst love an angel with the purity, the devotion, the protecting tenderness of an archangel's love."

Milton had listened reverentially, tremblingly as to the inspiration of a youthful oracle; but on looking up he saw the supposed statue quivering and drooping on her pedestal. The excitement was gone, and she was nothing now but a lovely, helpless woman. "And wilt thou not be that angel to me," said he, seizing her not unwilling hand, as he knelt and covered it with kisses.

"It may not be!"

"And wherefore? heaven and fate seem to will it thus, a celestial visitant with those lips, those eyes, that divine form of thine hath this very day hung over me—the spirit of my noon-tide dream, and like a prognostication of some bright future, seemed to imprint upon my brows the first kiss of youthful love. Words of music have been breathed in mine ear, improvisations strewed upon my path with a mysterious agency leading me on to this—to thee my bright deity, who my heart throbs to feel art the moving spirit of them all!"

"It was even so—but thou wilt know had I the aim or wistful hope to win thy love, no course like that which I stand confest in following would it have been mine to pursue. By accident my path came across you as you slept, and when gazing on your boyish beauty my soul told me it

had never been riveted on aught so utterly divine. I gazed and gazed, and in my delight improvised the language you could not have failed to discover engraved on the trunk of the tree which overshadowed your slumbers. Knowing that by this I gave your imagination some sweet problem to solve; little thinking that any recognition of my person by you should ever ensue, and contented to excite in your breast some momentary feeling for a poor unknown whose heart even now tells her can never be filled by any image save yours."

"Be happy, then," said Milton, "be mine and be happy—make two human creatures thus, for I feel that life will be but a blank without thee."

"Nay, nay, for both it is happier as it is—the paths of the world are a rough trial, and bitter still in the encounter for such natures as mine and thine. I would not have thee associate with my image aught of their darkness or sorrow—and oh God! what if you should come to love me less. Nay, I would only have you to think of me as a happy dream, an unsullied idealism of thy youth, a creature consecrated in thy memory till I become in the atmosphere of thy imagination sublimed and hallowed into a deity—one meet for the worship of such as thee to preside over thy lot, guiding thee into virtue and truth—and oh! if through the allurements of pleasure or the overtaking of an unwary hour, thou art about to be betrayed into aught unworthy of thy noble nature, could one thought of me remind thee of loftier aims, and like a loving reproach restore thee into thy native paths of uprightness—what a bright consciousness for my heart to keep—like a priceless treasure therein hoarded, to color with happiness all its future years."

Milton had continued kneeling with her hand clasped in his, but made no attempt at answer or interruption during the whole of this strange colloquy. He had rather listened as a devout votary to the outpourings of some presiding deity; and now as if in the attitude of a deeper devotion let go the hand, sinking his forehead on the cold marble floor. He raised it. She was gone, having vanished among the statues. Mysteriously she had come, so had she disappeared—he made no endeavor to follow her, and retracing his steps glided from among the revellers, and went forth alone.

Oh! wild and wondrous midnight,
There is a might in thee
To make the charmed body
Almost like spirit be,
And give it some faint glimpses
Of immortality!

LOWELL



NOVEMBER, 1844.

MEETINGS AND PARTINGS

UNDER THE OLD CEDAR.

BY MRS. LYDIA J. PEIRSON.

It was an autumn afternoon. The fields were all unburdened of their treasure, and left sere and desolate, except here and there where a tall weed tossed its white blossoms by the fence. The forests had changed their gold and crimson glory for a russet hue, though a few leaves still whirled downward on the gusty air, covering the tender forest flower like a blessing from on high to shield it from the approaching winter. The pure blue waters of the river seemed to linger on their way like all the summer beauties, loath to say farewell. Near the river grew a tall, dark cedar, a noble tree, which trembled not at the changing of the seasons, for winter and summer its dark tresses remained the same, and its beautiful clusters of variegated berries were a store for the wild bird when all other supplies had failed. No person living could remember when that tree was young, for the oldest men in the vicinity had played under the old cedar in their childhood; and many an aged grandmother remembered that she listened to the first tale of young love in the shadow of that tree, and still it was fair and strong, and threw a shadow cool and dark on the green turf beneath it, and on the bright waters that seemed lingering to enjoy its beauty.

Suddenly a little boat glided across the river from the opposite shore, where glittered spire and dome, and the more humble edifices of a small town, before which on the rippling tide trembled several gallant vessels. The boat contained but one man, a young and handsome person, whose black and passionate eyes were fixed upon that cedar with anxiety and impatience in every glance. He moored the boat in the shade and walked up the path past the cedar to the summit of the river bank. There he stood and looked away to a distant mansion, which lay bosomed in green trees, and surrounded by fair fields and orchards, now sere and bare. Presently he turned and walked back toward the

river, muttering, "woman's truth! She was to meet me at sunset!" Moodily he retraced his way and came again to the tree. "Is it possible that she will not come?" he said, and sat down on a rough, white rock. The shades of night were gathering in the distance when a white robed form appeared stealthily moving along a sequestered path toward him. It came near, it paused, and evidently trembled. "Clara!" he cried, and in a moment he clasped the long expected one to his bosom.

"Why are you here so late?" he asked reproachfully.

"You are aware," she said, "that I could not come openly. I made a visit to Emeline Bassett and then came down this way."

"Bless you, Clara!" cried the impetuous lover. "How very cruel your father is."

"No, Howard, my father is not cruel. He is, and ever has been a dear, good father to me. In this thing he is, perhaps, unreasonable, prejudiced; but I believe that his aim is solely my welfare and happiness."

"And you will secure that welfare and happiness by obeying him in all things."

"I have not obeyed my father in all things. If I had I should not have been here to listen to your taunts," she said sorrowfully.

"Forgive me, dear," he said, "I did not intend to taunt you, but could you not be happy in my love?"

"Howard," replied the maiden, "you know that I love you, or I should not thus disobey my father to meet you here. I could be happy—oh, how happy with you, alone in a desert, if you would always love me and speak kindly. But, Howard, if I was your wife, and you should forget my love and speak harshly to me, should I not weep for my poor deserted father who has never since I can remember given me one harsh word?"

"Yet he has forbidden you to see me, Clara."

"Yes, and his aversion to you lies heavily on my heart. I fear that he discerns an unfitness for each other which is hidden from our love-blinded eyes."

"You fear to trust me, Clara. You *fear* that I am indeed the miscreant your unjust father deems me! Hear me, Clara, I can endure this no longer. Say now that you will be mine; give me your sacred troth plight now, or we part here forever." The fair girl trembled violently, but she answered calmly and somewhat proudly,

"Howard, I will not tell you now how much I love you. You have received proof sufficient already. But you presume on my affections and demand more than I can give. I cannot pledge my hand without my father's knowledge. This I promise you—I will never be another's."

"It is of little consequence to me whose you are since you will not be mine," replied the petulant youth. "Oh, Clara, Clara! I would give my right hand if you could love as I love. But now we part, perhaps, forever. To-morrow I sail for the East Indies. I may never return. I leave you free. I here sunder the bond between us, and go forth a free man. You will be happy with your father; I will seek to endure life as best I may." As he spoke he resolutely unclasped her hands from his arm to which she clung with convulsive agony, and turned away.

"Do not, oh, do not leave me in anger!" she supplicated in a voice of agony.

He turned not toward her, but said brokenly, "God bless you, Clara!" And a deep groan of anguish burst from his proud, impetuous heart. She stood motionless and white as marble, with a strange bewildered expression of countenance, until he sprang into his boat and pushed off into the stream. Then with a cry as if of mortal agony she extended her hands toward him. He heard and saw, but he only shook his head negatively and paddled away.

Clara sunk upon the white rock, and then gushed up the deepest, bitter fountain of the heart; that fountain which once open never ceases to flow; and the waters of which give a plaintive sound and mournful color to all after years. Painful in the extreme were her sobs and voice of weeping. The night gathered around her, but she heeded it not; the wind became wild and damp, but she felt not its chill; her soul was darker than the night, her grief was wilder than the autumnal wind. She felt that Howard was cruel, yet she could not be offended; she knew that his temper was imperious, and yet she could not feel that she had escaped the sway of a tyrant. She only knew that she had loved in vain; and that her hopes and her heart were alike broken.

At length she arose and walked slowly homeward. Her anxious father was seeking for his child, his only one. He saw her afar in the clear cold moonlight, and hastened to meet her. He took her hand and started, it was so damp and cold.

"What is the matter, Clara?" he asked—"where have you been?"

"Lead me home," she said, "and I will tell you all."

And she did tell him all; with pale cheek and bitter sobbings she recounted all her love, all her stolen meetings with Howard under the old cedar, and the cruel parting of that night.

"And has not his conduct on this occasion, my dear child, confirmed all that I have told you of his unfitness to be lord of your gentle heart and ruler of your destiny? Clara, Howard Reynolds is a bad man. His ungovernable passions will lead him from sorrow to sorrow, until he sinks in utter ruin. God grant that he drag no innocent victim down with him."

Clara felt the truth of her father's words, but her heart would not say amen. He had been her companion all her life, and his very impetuosity of temperament had given him an ascendancy over her young spirit which bent her ever to his will, and made his guidance and approval necessary to all her doings. But now that her reason seconded her father's representations of his character and unfitness for a companion to lean on through life, she had resolved to withhold the irrevocable promise which binds a woman's destiny to good or evil, gay or sorrow, until his spirit should become subdued; or at least less overbearing and irritable. But she had not been prepared for his precipitate action, and was wholly overcome by the suddenness of his desertion, in anger, and without hope.

The next morning she found herself ill of a violent cold and wholly dispirited, so that she almost wished for death. But reason and religion came to her aid representing to her the folly and wickedness of undervaluing the rich gift of life, with all its blessings and facilities of doing good to others, and, as it were, throwing it loathingly back in the face of the beneficent Giver, because a man in his unreasonable passion had despised her love.

Howard meantime sailed for India in a state of mind which even Clara might have pitied. Oh, how gladly would he have returned and besought her pardon kneeling at her feet; but he was out upon the ocean with no possibility of returning. And then judging her heart by his own, he fancied that she could not but be indignant, and that thought nerved him in his mad course. But his soul was in torment, suffering, as it were, the agonies of alternate frost and fire.

Another ship was ready to depart on a long voyage, and a poor orphan girl whose lot was bitter servitude, went down to the old cedar to exchange with her young sailor a long farewell. Her humble attire could not conceal her extreme beauty from her lover's eyes, and she gazed

proudly on the manly bearing and noble features of her heart's idol. They met joyfully as confiding lovers meet, they spoke of sorrow, of hope; of the pain of absence, of the dangers and the death that perchance awaited them, and Mary wept. But Harry kissed away her tears, assured her that God would remember them, and bless them. He bade her endure cheerfully the bitterness of her lot, and trust that he would find wealth and return to make her happy. They parted, and as he grasped his oar to depart, dashed away the big tears and shouted, "good bye, love! be of good cheer," she turned homeward weeping, yet leaning on the angel Hope.

Seven years had made no change in the appearance of the old cedar, though many a storm had shaken its dark tresses, and many a noon tide sun looked lovingly upon it. Clara Calville had become an orphan, and though many a worthy heart had been laid upon her shrine, yet from every such offering she turned tearfully away. Her heart was desolate. She could not listen to the voice of love, it was to her a funeral dirge. Her cheek had lost its rose, and her eye was sad and drooping: seven years had wrought a great change in her. In Mary the same time had made little alteration, and that was in her favor. She had grown dazzlingly beautiful. And that very beauty was to her a dangerous possession. Her unprotected state and unpleasant situation gave one who had wealth and personal advantages a pretext to profess for her admiration, sympathy, and the warmest friendship.

She confided in him, leaned on his friendship with girlish gratitude, and there was nought that woman *might* do which she could would not have done to serve him. But when he would have presumed upon her affection, the love that lived in her heart for Harry kept her from the snare that would have been perdition to her; and she found a friend and protector in Clara Calville, and they dwelt like sisters together. Mary was full of hope, awaiting her sailor's return; Clara had no hope, but she leaned on the arm of strong endurance and went forward in meek resignation to the will of heaven.

The seat under the old cedar was their favorite resort, and many a summer afternoon did they pass there with book and work. And then came autumn, the seventh autumn from the departure of their friends. It was just such an afternoon as that on which Clara and Howard parted so bitterly. She went sorrowfully down to the cedar to weep over the remembrance of the past. She was startled from her tearful musings by a glad voice crying,

"Look, dear Clara! look! That is Harry's ship—oh, if he is in her!" and Mary burst into

the wildest passion of sobs and tears. Hope and joy chastened by fear were almost breaking her heart. It was a soul-stirring sight, that weather-beaten bark toiling wearily up the blue river with her freight of uncertainty for the weary hearted watchers who had grown sick with hope deferred. Mothers and wives and daughters, fathers, sisters and brothers crowded to the landing ere she cast her anchor, and the crew as they landed from the boats were every one clasped to throbbing hearts. Mary strained her misty eyes in a vain endeavor to recognize in the distance the man whose truth she never doubted; and Clara covered her face and wept aloud.

"There is one poor man who has no friend to greet him," said Mary at length. "How sorrowfully he wanders along the beach. Poor sailor! Are all his loved ones dead; or is he a stranger from another land?" Clara looked. Could it be that she could at that distance recognize a human form? The breadth of the river was a mile at least, and yet she felt in her soul that the solitary individual was Howard Reynolds. A faint sickness seized her, and Mary found it necessary to support her feeble form all the way home. That was a sleepless night to the two orphan maidens. How should sleep close her soft pinions upon brain and heart so wildly throbbing with the fevered current of suspense?

Morning came calm and clear, but it brought no calm to those anxious spirits. Clara spoke not of her surmisings; but Mary sought assurance of her lover's safety in the kind comfortings of friendship. Noon brought joy to her heart almost too great for endurance. Harry came; true to his troth; beautiful in pride of manhood; rich and happy. Mary poured out her thankfulness to Him who had filled her cup of happiness to the brim.

"But who was he," she said, "who found no friend to greet him when he landed?"

"He is a strange and mysterious man," replied Harry, a shade coming over his bright face while he spoke; "a man of sorrow, of crime, I fear. He came on board our vessel at Cadiz, for we have been cruising and trading in the Mediterranean, and touched at that fine old Spanish city. He did not tell us who or what he was, and during our voyage homeward has been taciturn, restless and gloomy; walking all day long from place to place, and all night moaning as if in extreme pain. We were almost afraid of him lest there was blood on his hands, and we should suffer from the vengeance that is due to crime. But his conduct since we entered the river has convinced me that he is deranged in his mind."

Clara, although she did truly rejoice in the felicity of her friends, felt an increased weight upon her aching heart, and toward evening, leaving

them to their happiness, wandered down to the old cedar. She was already within its shadow when a low moan startled her, and there kneeling by the rock, with his face bent and concealed by a kerchief, was the figure she had seen land from the ship—the figure in which she could not be mistaken. She uttered a wild cry. He sprang to his feet.

"Oh, that shriek," he cried. "The voice that has been ringing in my ears and soul ever since I left this spot! Clara! angel of my heart, do not fly me. I am miserable, wholly so, I will not detain you long, but if you will listen to my story of agony and then say that you forgive me, I will die in peace."

"Earnestly do I forgive you, Howard!" cried the fair girl, while the fountain of hope within her spirit bursting its icy bondage thrilled her with a strange happiness. "I forgive you joyfully." He shuddered as he looked upon her beaming face.

"Hear me first, Clara," he said. "Nay, touch not my hand, for I am perjured. My wicked temper has undone me forever. I will not *say* how strong, how faithful was my love for you, I am here to *prove* it all. But after my mad desertion of you I deemed that you would be implacable and I swore to forget your love. But my anguish was intolerable. Oh, Clara, the impetuosity of my temperament is the same in love, in resentment, in remorse. I became a wanderer. My wealth gave me access to every hall and palace; I stifled my heart's beatings before the world, and acted the hypocrite most successfully. A fair young daughter of France loved me. I did not seek her affections, I could not reciprocate her passion, I saw her partiality and suffered it to increase, I knew not wherefore. She was beautiful, the daughter of a noble house, and I became her husband. But her love was most bitter to me. In her arms I was most miserable. I felt my brain reeling and my soul growing mad; I could not endure her endearments; I told her that I could not live, and hear her voice, it told me of that heaven, from which I was an outcast forever. She wept and besought me to tell her all that troubled me, but I wrung her hand, and with a wild farewell left her forever. Life became to me an intolerable burden. I wandered from kingdom to kingdom, but everywhere spectres of maddening agony met me. At length I thought that if you would forgive me I could feel a beam of peace. I did not expect that you had remained true to the vow from which I so madly released you. I came. They told me that Clara Calville was an orphan and still unmarried. Do not say that you are not so for my sake. Oh, if you knew how I cling to that one consolation.

Clara, say but once that you have not ceased to love me. Say that even now you do not hate me, and I will die content."

"Howard Reynolds," she replied, "from my childhood I have loved you, and you only. You have acted rashly, and I forgive you; you have suffered and I pity you."

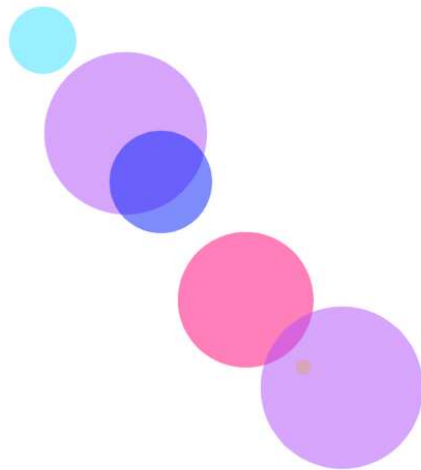
"God bless you forever!" he cried. "Now leave me, Clara, for I have not strength to go from you." She arose and extended her hand. He grasped it, pressed it to his burning forehead, and then flung it from him exclaiming, "go now while I am able to see you depart."

She felt that his reason was unsettled, and turned away agonizing with grief and fear, and the crushing of her last and dearest hope. Who can declare the agony of her spirit as she slowly ascended the hill, while the deep groanings of the miserable man came distinctly upon her ear.

Oh, that was a parting more bitter than the most bitter death. Yet Clara's heart was schooled to endurance, and she bent meekly to this last and heaviest blow.

But in the morning some children discovered a dead man kneeling by the white stone under the cedar, with his face resting on his clasped hands. Poor Howard!—his heart had broken in that dreadful parting, and his life went out when the drooping form of his stricken Clara disappeared from his straining sight.

Clara is still a meek *old maid* in the house of Harry and Mary Harris; and those who taunt her with her single state, or jestingly propose marriage to her, little think how deep, how dread an agony her patient smile conceals.





ONLY A TRIFLE.

BY EMILY H. MAY.

"It's only a trifle, uncle," said Harry Stuyvesant, to his guardian. "Miss Boyd may be, as you say, careless; but it's only a trifle, and outweighed by her beauty and brilliant talents."

"You may live to think differently, Henry," said the old gentleman. "I have seen thrice your years, and, depend upon it, the happiness of a married life rests on the *little* things rather than on the *great* ones. You can't all the time be thinking of your wife's beauty, but will sometimes recur to the comforts you once enjoyed in a tidy house: and, before a year has gone over your head, you will be willing to sacrifice her brilliant talents for an amiable disposition. Give me a woman who has the tact to perceive and gratify one's little peculiarities of taste or habit—who knows when to have the slippers warmed, how much to cook the joint of meat, in what way to do up one's linen, and to attend to all these other little, every day comforts. You may despise these trifles now, but they have more to do with the happiness of a married life than anything else."

Henry remained silent a moment, looking at his watch-key which he kept twirling; for he felt that his uncle was eyeing him keenly. At length he spoke.

"But, granting what you say—how do you know that Ellen Boyd will not attend to these trifles? Cannot a woman of genius make a kind and considerate wife?"

"Certainly—a few may—"

"Then," interrupted Harry, exultingly, "that is giving up your case. I'll run the risk: she'll be one of the few—and who wouldn't rather have a beauty and a *bel esprit* than a mere humdrum," and with these words he bowed himself out of his uncle's office.

The old gentleman shook his head sadly, as he gazed after the young man.

"It is no use arguing with him, I see," he said to himself—"the boy's crazy with love, and is determined to throw himself away. I can only give him advice, and advice won't move him. Well, let him try the experiment. As he makes his bed, so he must lie." And with this homely proverb, the old gentleman turned to his desk and resumed the examination of his papers.

Ellen Boyd was a beauty and a wit; but her temper was high, and she was both by nature and education selfish. The gratification of her pleasure was all she cared for, and to this she managed to make everything and everybody subservient. Her splendid face and figure, united to

her really brilliant powers of conversation, made her a favorite in every circle in which she moved, and procured her constant admirers, who fed her self-love with flattery. At home she was considered the prodigy of the family, and in consequence had been spoiled from childhood. Her plainer sisters had learned to sacrifice a portion of their own wardrobes to render that of their sister more splendid; and often they, as well as their mother, labored all day to adjust the dress that Ellen was to wear at a ball in the evening, for the family was not wealthy, and even had some difficulty, rumor said, to make ends meet at the close of the year. While her sisters were thus occupied, the proud beauty was usually lying on a sofa reading the last novel, or, perhaps, ill-humoredly finding fault with them for not performing their task more to her taste. But all these things were borne meekly; for Ellen was expected to make a grand alliance, and besides, despite her many faults, her mother and sisters doted on her.

Her most successful lover was Harry Stuyvesant, and as he was wealthy, and moreover of one of the best families of the state, people said it would be a match. His uncle, more than once, expostulated with him, but these arguments generally ended as the one we have recorded, and finally it became publicly known that Harry was to be married early in the Autumn.

Harry took his young wife to a handsome house in the city, where he intended hereafter to reside during the winter; and, for awhile, no man was more happy. The beauty of his bride was the theme of praise in every assembly where she appeared; he saw himself envied the possession of such a treasure; he was almost bewildered with gratified pride. At his own table, too, the most celebrated men of the country were proud to gather, for the grace and dignity with which Mrs. Stuyvesant presided, and the brilliancy of her conversation, were extolled by all. For two months Harry was at the pinnacle of bliss.

But he soon began to find that the cup was mixed with other ingredients than those of happiness. If to see his wife shine in company afforded him such pleasure, it was alas! the only gratification her society afforded him, for at home she was always tired and silent, and even grew pettish when he sought conversation.

About three months after their marriage Harry returned home, one wet evening, tired and exhausted by a day of unusually laborious business. With a sense of relief he deposited his wet umbrella in the rack and opened the drawing-room door. But instead of the cheerful fire he hoped to find there, all was cold and comfortless. He then went up stairs to his wife's

sitting-room; but she was not there. A little annoyed at finding her out, he rang the bell for a servant; but he had to repeat the summons before any one appeared. At last the cook entered.

"Where is Mrs. Stuyvesant?"

"Gone out," was the reply. "She has been out all day."

"Humph! Are you the only servant about?"

"Yes, sir. The rest have all gone out too—they didn't expect you back so soon."

"Isn't there any fire in the house?" said he, sharply, checking himself in a severe animadversion on the servants.

"There comes John," said the cook, as the gate was heard shutting, "he will soon make up the fire, sir, and missus will be home by 'n bye."

In no very good humor Harry had to walk up and down the hall until a fire was made, and even after that, quite half an hour elapsed before the carriage drove up with his wife. She came in, complaining of excessive fatigue, and with a fit of peevishness, for the milliner had disappointed her; and her husband accordingly spent one of the most unpleasant evenings of his life.

Another month passed on, and Harry's pleasure in witnessing the triumph of his wife's beauty continued to wear away beneath the thousand petty annoyances of home. He still, at times, loved her as passionately as ever, and often, at an evening assembly, he would stand apart, leaning against a pillar, contemplating, like a young lover, the effect produced by her transcendent loveliness. At other times he would hang, a charmed listener, on the words with which she was enchaining a circle of dignified and renowned statesmen. But when he entered his home, all his happiness vanished. His wife belonged to that class who seem to think that it is too much trouble to dress for a husband, and accordingly she met him at breakfast and dinner, unless when there was company, in an old, slovenly dress, with her hair negligently arranged, and a manner that was sure to be indifferent, even if it was not ill-humored; for as Ellen had married him for his wealth alone, and that was now assured to her, she no longer considered it worth her while to consult his comfort. In the same way she met every advance for an evening's quiet enjoyment when there was no ball or soiree to attend, though this occurred but rarely. Instead of striving to entertain her husband, she usually took up a novel or slept on the sofa. Sometimes Harry ventured to expostulate, but this only produced altercations, and he was wise enough to give it up. Scenes like that we have recorded, when he would return home to find everything comfortless,

servants negligent because the mistress of the house was careless, became but too frequent. Harry, at length, did what hundreds of other husbands have done before, in like circumstances—he sought abroad for that comfort he could not find at home.

There is not now a more unhappy couple than Mr. and Mrs. Stuyvesant. She still shines in public, the admired of all observers, but her beauty is already falling a victim to her ill-temper, and it is rumored that her husband's fortune begins to feel the results of his gambling life, and that daily scenes occur between the two in consequence of his refusal to supply her extravagance as before.

"I feared it would be so," said Harry's uncle, the other night to his wife, "and I said, from the beginning, that Ellen's selfishness would make her disregard his comfort. Ah! my dear, it is because you have paid so much attention to the every day trifles of married life that we have been so happy."



THE REFUGEE.

A TALE OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION.

BY JAMES H. DANA.

DURING the war of the revolution, the lower counties of New Jersey were infested by a set of desperadoes, passing under the name of refugees, who, in the absence of the whigs in camp, plundered and insulted their defenceless families. A band of these men became particularly notorious on the little Egg Harbor river, and that section of the country is yet rife with legends of their misdeeds. A party, equally numerous and even more lawless, for a long time devastated the settlements along the Maurice river. Our story relates to this latter.

It was at the close of a beautiful day, in the early part of October, that an athletic young man, whose frank and good humored countenance was a passport to the acquaintance of strangers, approached a clearing not far from the present decayed village of Dorchester. The house was of but one story, built of thick, hewn logs, and surrounded by scanty fields, in which the stumps of the original forest trees were yet visible. But everything about the place had an air of neatness, which was increased, when, pushing open the door, he entered the large, comfortable kitchen, with its nicely scoured floor, and its dresser on which were arrayed in bright rows the pewter plates. His footsteps had scarcely sounded on the floor before a light figure sprang toward him, and the next instant was locked in his arms.

"God bless you, Mary," he said, as he parted the hair fondly from her forehead, and stooping kissed the fair brow.

The girl looked up into his face, and said half enquiringly, half positively,

"You have come to stay—have you not? Do now, give up running your sloop until things become more settled. You will be captured yet," she continued, as her lover shook his head, "and then, if thrown into those dreadful prison ships at New York, you will never get back."

Notwithstanding the imploring tone in which she spoke, her lover still shook his head.

"Nay, dearest, your woman's fears alarm you without cause. There is no danger. The English ships have left the Delaware, and I must make the old sloop pay me now, for your sake."

She buried her face in his bosom to hide the blushes at this allusion. He continued cheerfully.

"Now can you not find me a supper? You boast of your housekeeping, you know; and yet I'll venture we are almost as good cooks on board.

At any rate, we are a little more hospitable when we see a visitor who has come miles to meet us, and walked all the way."

He said this in a playful tone, and the girl immediately hastened to set the supper table. His eye followed her graceful movements, and they conversed together, as lovers only converse, during the half hour in which the preparations for the meal were going on. At length the other members of the family came in, and the conversation became general.

It was yet early, however, when the young man rose to go. The girl followed him out of the door.

"Why so soon?" she said.

"It is high tide, and I have already overstayed my time," he said. "But in a few days I shall be back, and it may be I will be so successful that there will be no necessity for going again."

"God grant it may be so," she said fervently, "I feel a presentiment of some danger impending over you. There is Hogan, the refugee—"

"He owes me ill-will, I know," said the lover, "ever since you preferred me to him. But he has left this part of the country, and I should never fear him in a fair fight."

"But he was always stealthy and mean; and would attack you secretly."

"Oh! but there is no fear of him," gaily said the lover. "Believe me, I shall be back in less than two weeks, and then—"

He pressed the blushing girl to his bosom, kissed her again and again, and then with a hurried embrace tore himself away. When he had crossed the road and was just entering the woods, he turned and waved his hat. The girl was still standing there on the watch. She kissed her hand to him, and the next instant he had vanished from her sight.

But for many minutes she continued to gaze on the spot where he had disappeared; and so intent was the reverie into which she fell, that she did not notice the approach of a third party, in the person of a young man of the neighborhood, whom popular rumor declared to be one of her suitors.

"Good evening, Ellen," he said. "You are late out here to-night."

"Ah! is it you, James? Good evening," and she frankly extended her hand. "Will you walk in?"

"No, I thank you—I haven't but a minute to stay." There was a short silence, when he added, "Have you seen Hogan lately? He has come back, I suppose you know."

"No—I did not know it," said Ellen, her heart beating violently.

"I believe he and Briggs are no great friends—

Hogan swears he will have revenge on him, though I don't know for what. Do you?"

Ellen read the man's heart in those words. He was a rejected suitor, and suspecting her love for Briggs, had visited her expressly to torture her by this intelligence.

"How know you this?" she said, affecting as much calmness as possible. "Have you seen Hogan lately?"

"He was about this morning, but has gone down the river to his old place. They say he has a dozen men there, refugees may be like himself. By the bye, have you seen Briggs to-day? I heard he sailed with the morning tide."

Ellen turned pale at this intelligence, for her woman's quick wit perceived at once, by the meaning tone of her visitor, that Hogan had determined to waylay her lover, and that her informant, from a feeling of base revenge, had come to apprise her of it after he thought it would be too late for any notice of the attack to be conveyed to Briggs. She had the presence of mind not to show her agitation, nor did she undeceive the speaker as to the time when her lover sailed. She adroitly turned the conversation.

"Won't you walk in?" she said, "the nights are getting chilly. Father and mother are yet up, I believe."

"No, thank you," said the young man, moving off, "I must be going. Good bye!"

Ellen watched him with a fluttering heart until he had disappeared in the darkness, when she burst into tears. But suddenly dashing them away with her hand, she entered the house, and cautiously approached the door of her little room. The family had all retired. Taking a pen and ink she wrote, with some agitation, a few lines, and placed them where they would be seen the first thing in the morning.

"This will tell them where I have gone," she said, still weeping. "It would not do to wake them or they would not let me go. But how can I stay here, when *he* is in danger?" She paused and mused. "Yes! it is too late to overtake him at the wharf. I must go down the river and intercept him: God will be my protector."

With these words she hastened to attire herself in her bonnet and cloak, and then kneeling down, she prayed for a few minutes silently, after which she rose, wiped the tears from her eyes, and set forth unattended on her long and perilous walk. More than once she started, as she wound her way through the solitary forest, at the cry of a night-bird; and now and then some unknown noise, or a distant shadow assuming suddenly the appearance of a human being, would cause her knees to totter, but, after leaning for a space

against a tree and summoning aid from on high by a hasty prayer, she would recover confidence and go on.

At length she reached the shore of the river, after more than an hour's travel. She recognized the place at once, and following the bank soon arrived at a solitary farm house. All was still around, and she did not wake the inhabitants, for they were suspected of being unfriendly to the whigs, so she merely unloosed a boat which she found lying by the water-side and entering it, waited breathlessly for the appearance of her lover's sloop.

A quarter of an hour passed, which seemed an age, and yet no signs of the vessel were visible.

"Surely it cannot have passed," she said anxiously. "Yet the wind is fair, and the tide strong."

Another interval elapsed which her alarm magnified into an hour; and at last she burst into tears.

"He has passed, and I shall never see him again," she sobbed. "Oh! God of mercy, spare his life!" and clasping her hands convulsively, she looked up to heaven.

Suddenly a sound met her ear which she mistook for the creaking of a block. She started up in the boat, every feature of her face radiant with hope, and looked eagerly toward the bend of the river above. But she was doomed to disappointment. For five minutes she gazed in vain.

"It was only the sighing of the wind," she sobbed, again overcome by tears. "Oh! what shall I do?—what can I do?" she said piteously, wringing her hands.

All at once the apparent sound of the sheets traversing their iron guide broke the stillness; and this time she was not mistaken. Brushing the tears hurriedly from her eyes she was able to discern the shadowy form of a sloop rounding the point in the river above.

"It is him—it is him," she exclaimed agitatedly, and falling on her knees, with glad tears, she returned thanks to God. Then hurriedly and nervously taking the oars, she pushed off into the stream, and suffered the boat to drop down with the tide. As she expected, the sloop soon overtook her.

"Boat ahoy!" cried a well known voice, that made her heart leap, as the stout vessel came surging down toward her.

"James—don't you know me?" she articulated faintly, all the modesty of her nature suddenly aroused at perceiving, now for the first time, the apparent indelicacy of her behavior.

"Ellen!" cried the voice from the sloop, in a tone of surprise, and immediately the vessel was rounded to, and the athletic arms of her

lover lifted her on deck; for, overcome with shame, she could neither stand nor look up.

"What is the matter, dearest?" said her lover, as he held her in his arms, "has anything happened at home? Speak—you don't know how you alarm me."

His anxious tone recovered for Ellen her confidence, and she hastened to tell him what she had heard.

"I could not," she said, with her face hidden on his broad breast, "stay at home, and leave you to this peril. Father is old, and I was afraid he could not be here in time——"

"God in heaven bless you. How can I ever repay you for this? But I must find shelter for you in the cabin, for no time is to be lost. We are already in sight of Hogan's place, and it is too late to retreat. Even if we anchor they will come after us; but, now that I know their intentions, there is nothing to fear, and our best course, therefore, is to disarm suspicion by going on."

Ellen would have remonstrated, but, at that instant, the moon broke forth, and a large boat was seen pulling out into the stream some distance down the river. She suffered herself, therefore, to be led into the cabin, where she waited, with a breathless heart, the termination of the contest.

Tradition tells how, in a few words, their leader informed the crew of the approaching attack, and of the vigorous measures taken to defeat it. The sloop's course was retarded as much as possible, while the wood, which formed a part of the cargo, was hastily arranged in piles around the quarter-deck as well as forward, so as completely to barricade every side of the vessel. Fortunately there was a double supply of muskets on board, and these were all loaded and ranged ready for use. In that critical hour the hand and voice of Briggs were everywhere. He felt that not only his own life, but what was dearer even than that, depended on success in the present struggle.

For some time the refugees, who continued pulling lazily up the river, as if not caring to excite suspicion, did not see the movements on board the sloop; but when the preparations for defence became visible in the growing bulwark on every side of the vessel, they gave a loud cheer and began to pull lustily toward her.

"They are coming now," said Briggs, placing the last armful of wood on the pile along the quarter-deck. "Take your muskets, lads, and be ready for a volley—the bloody refugees!"

Quick and sharp came the rollicking of the oars to their ears, and even those manly hearts beat faster as they counted the fearful odds against them, and recognized the burly figures

of Hogan and one or two of his more desperate associates.

"Pull away—around by the stern, my lads," shouted the refugee leader, rocking in the stern sheets with the motion of the boat.

"Now's your time," said Briggs energetically. "Pick your men. I'll take Hogan."

The muskets were raised, and a breathless instant ensued.

"Are you ready?" whispered their leader.

"Ay!" was the prompt, stern answer.

"Then fire!"

The volley was not a moment too soon. Three of the men in the boat fell, but almost immediately she struck the side of the vessel, and her crew began to scramble over the barricade erected between them and her defenders. Firing was now impossible; the conflict was hand to hand. It was then that Briggs remembered Ellen with each blow of his sturdy arm. Clubbing his musket, he met the assailants at every point, cheering and animating his scanty band even more by his example than his voice. Short, but terrible was the conflict. Most of the outlaws never reached the deck of the sloop, but fell back wounded or dead into their boat; while the few who gained at last a foothold on the vessel, sunk finally before the athletic arms and indomitable courage of the defenders. In less than five minutes after the attack began, the refugees were repulsed at every point, their leader killed, and the few who remained alive in full flight to the shore. Two of their number remained prisoners in the hands of Briggs, and subsequently met the deserved fate of their crimes.

No sooner had the enemy left the vessel than Briggs hastened to the cabin. Ellen was already ascending the gangway, alarmed by the cessation of his voice, which, throughout the strife, had risen over the noise of the conflict and sustained her during its terrible suspense.

Their meeting we shall not attempt to describe. It is sufficient to say that long after, they were accustomed to refer to it as the happiest moment of their lives.

"But now, dearest," he said, at length, "I must see you safe at your father's, ere I proceed. Let me hope for still more."

Briggs accompanied Ellen home, and ere he returned to his vessel, he had pressed her to his bosom as his wife.

For many a long year the old musket, with its battered stock, used on that memorable day by the hero of our story, was wont to be exhibited to the visitors of the happy household that grew up around Ellen. It may still be in existence, a treasured relic among her grand-children.



THE LAST WILL.

BY MRS. MARY V. SPENCER.

It was a dark and dismal night, and the rain poured down in torrents. The wind whistled around the corners, or shrieked among the chimneys; the street lamps flared dim; and even the watchman deserted his post and shrank into a sheltered corner.

In an old, rickety tenement, in one of the narrowest lanes of London sat a young couple with their only child. The mother was still young, scarcely eighteen indeed, but of unusual beauty; though sorrow had already begun to make inroads on that fine countenance. Her husband was some years older, with a face of much character though not of decided beauty; but the lines around the mouth and the care-worn expression of the brow showed that he had already warred with misfortune. In fine contrast to his face was the placid expression of the child's countenance, as it lay in its mother's lap with the light of the lamp falling shaded across it. A smile was on its face as it slept. It seemed as if an angel looked out from it.

Suddenly a knock was heard at the door. The man gazed around on the bare and desolate apartment, and did not stir. The wife seemed to read his thoughts.

"Go, dear James," she said. "What matters our poor accommodations!" and she tried to smile. "Perhaps it is a bearer of good news; surely no one else would come out on such a night as this. How the wind drives against the panes!"

The husband advanced to the door, and opening it, a man in livery delivered him a note. At sight of the green and gold of the man's dress he started back, but the servant leaving the missive in his hand was gone instantly.

"It is from my father's steward," said the husband, with an excited voice, as he broke the seal.

"God be praised!" said the wife, "he has relented. I knew he would. Oh! we shall yet see happy days," and she burst into tears. Her husband's agitation was scarcely less than her own, for his hand trembled violently as he held the note to the lamp.

His wife eagerly perused his countenance, and she seemed to gather hope as he read. At length he looked up.

"I must go, dearest," were his words. "My father is not expected to live over the night. He relents, for he has sent for me. God bless you, Mary, and our child," and a large tear rolled heavily down his cheek.

"I thank thee, heavenly father," said the wife, clasping her hands and lifting her swimming eyes

on high, "my prayers have been heard. Oh! my sweet babe, thou shalt no longer want," and she clasped the sleeping cherub in convulsive joy to her bosom.

The husband dashed the tears hastily from his eyes, kissed the mother and her child fervently, and snatching up his hat and cloak was rushing from the room.

"I will sit up for you, love," said the wife.

The husband gave her a look of unutterable fondness and stepped out into the storm. It was raining fiercely, and, at intervals, the thunder shook the sky, an unusual occurrence at that season of the year. While he is making his way on foot, against the driving tempest, to his father's princely mansion, let us hurry over the events which had reduced him and a lovely wife to penury.

Sir James Hengist was descended from one of those ancient families of England, which had been great while the Normans were still landless, and many of which still remain among the gentry of Cheshire and Lincolnshire, looking down with contempt on the new nobility. In the course of generations, however, the family had become poor, and Sir James, to rebuild its fortunes had married a lady of great wealth in the city. Lady Hengist was as good as she was rich, and won all hearts in her exalted station. She lived to see her only son attain the age of twenty, and then died regretted by all, and by none seemingly more than by her husband.

Lady Hengist had a niece, the daughter of a favorite step-brother, whom she had educated from a child, and whose union with her son had been a favorite project. She had long secretly entertained this idea, and what then was her gratification when she beheld a passion growing up for each other in the young people's bosoms. Her niece was, at this time, but fifteen, yet already ripening into womanhood, and one of the most beautiful and accomplished of her sex. Sir James appeared to enter into his wife's plans, and no obstacle was placed in the way of the lovers, so that for nearly a year their lives passed away in that brightest of all dreams, a first love sanctioned by friends.

But Lady Hengist had been scarcely three months in her grave before a marked change came over Sir James, in his demeanor to his son. He was continually reproving the young man, who no longer could do anything to please him, and being a high-spirited youth, the heir was at length driven from the paternal roof by this constant annoyance. Toward the lovely Mary Crawford, however, the conduct of Sir James had been unchanged, even when she ventured to expostulate with him, as she sometimes

did, in behalf of his son. There were those, indeed, who said he had interested motives in this, and the truth of their suspicions became apparent after the son had sought a home elsewhere. Mary was now sixteen, in the full maturity of early English beauty; and Sir James, overlooking his tacit consent that his son should marry her, and forgetting the noble-hearted woman whom he had lately followed to the grave, determined to make her his wife. He was still in the prime of life, and might have succeeded with others scarcely less beautiful than Mary. But her heart was already another's, and she turned away with disgust from his addresses. It was sometime before she was aware of his intentions, for she would not believe he could be guilty of such baseness, but when his attentions grew so marked as to become the kitchen gossip, she could no longer shut her eyes to them. She made no effort now to conceal her repugnance. But Sir James was not to be foiled. In his youth he had been a man of gallantry, and still piqued himself on his power over the sex. But he tried every art in vain. At length, however, it became impossible for her to remain any longer under his roof; and she would have left it before only that she knew not where to go, and besides she had indulged a hope that by remaining she might bring about a reconciliation between her lover and his father.

The young heir had been, for some time, aware of his father's designs, and had urged Mary to elope with him, but as long as a hope of reconciliation remained she had refused. Now, however, there was no alternative. Hengist House was no more a place for her; and without a relative in the world to whom she could appeal, the orphan had no other resort but to throw herself into her lover's arms. Accordingly the young couple were married. And now began their sorrows.

The rage of Sir James, on hearing of this union, almost killed him. His passions were always violent, but they now seemed fiendish. He swore that he would disinherit his son, and immediately cut off the allowance he had hitherto allowed his heir. The appeals of the offenders were in vain. The father was inexorable. He wished to see them starve to death, he said, and then he could surrender life willingly. The letters which Mary, unknown to her husband, wrote almost daily, were returned unopened. Every one who might have otherwise assisted them, was turned against them by the powerful influence of the angry father, and in less than three months, the young heir found himself literally starving in the heart of London. His education, however, had not been neglected, and he

sought among the booksellers for employment, determined not to give up in despair. For a long time he was unsuccessful, but finally found a paltry job on which he managed barely to live until his wife presented him with a lovely babe. After this, all means of regular subsistence deserted him. Yet he struggled on, endeavoring, when in the presence of his wife, to keep up a cheerful countenance, and almost consoled for his unavailing struggles during the day by her sweet welcome and the smile of his babe at evening. But as winter approached, and his last guinea vanished, the iron began to enter into his soul. Several times he made abortive attempts to soften his father; and his wife also secretly tried for aid in the same quarter, but in vain. For more than a week they had now subsisted on their credit at a green grocer's shop, but this could not last long, and the almost distracted husband knew not where to turn, when unexpectedly this note arrived from his father.

His heart was full of high hopes, mingled with sorrowful feelings, as he hurried through the tempest. The knowledge that his only parent was on his death-bed awoke all the associations of childhood, bringing back the days when his father doated on him. The subsequent harshness of his parent was forgotten; and, with the glad hope that he was going to receive and bestow forgiveness, the son proceeded almost breathless to his early home.

The massive doors swung open at his knock, the well-known servant ushered him deferentially through the hall, a whispered consultation was held at the sick-man's door, and then he was desired to enter.

With a palpitating heart he had waited during the delay, and now he rushed in, all eagerness to be reconciled to his dying parent. He saw nothing but the form supported on pillows, and the pale face of the invalid, and in an instant he was on his knees beside the bed and had clasped the sick man's hand in his, while tears gushed from him like rain; for in that moment, with the recollections of childhood had come back all its softness. But the hand was rudely jerked back, and a scornful laugh met his ear.

"Ha! ha!—you have come, thinking I am about to make you my heir," began the sick man, "have you? And so you begin playing your part this way! I have sent for you for another reason, as you shall learn, you villain."

The young heir started to his feet. He could scarcely believe his ears. Could those brutal words, that scornful laugh proceed from a dying man, and that man his parent? He stared incredulously at those around, and then at the face of the invalid, but though he read pity on the

former, hate distorted the latter. Again his parent laughed sneeringly.

"So you came here thinking I was about to make you my heir, eh! Did your wife and child, sir, come along, to exult in my halls before I am cold?"

"Father—father—" said the young man imploringly, as yet bewildered by this strange scene.

"Don't call me father, you unnatural child," said the invalid, half rising in bed, and shaking his clenched hand. "You have brought me to this—you have, you rascal. But I'll have my revenge. You shall starve, sir, starve—I hoped to live to see it—but I'll make it certain."

"Sir James," said the son, "I will go rather than to stay to hear these things. And may God forgive me and you for all that is wrong between us."

"Dare you, sir, talk of God forgiving you, you villain," shouted the sick man, almost foaming with passion, while the alarmed attendants, not daring to interfere, stood trembling, looking from father to son, "I tell you he'll let you starve, and you can't help it. I'll make it sure. Yes! and I'll live to see it," he exclaimed with a horrible oath. "I won't die—it's all a lie of the doctors. You and your paramour shall beg before my face, you shall—"

"Say what you will of me, but forbear my wife," exclaimed the young man with flashing eyes, "here I stay no longer," and he moved toward the door. But three or four servants interposed.

"Keep him in," fiercely exclaimed the invalid, "make him stay till the will is read and signed. He shall see it all," and again there was a terrible oath.

"I pray you, sir," said the conveyancer now advancing, for the young man had not seen him before. "Consider the place," he added imploringly, as he saw the son about to knock down the servants who opposed his path, "it shall be hastened as much as possible if you will only bear it," he whispered.

The young heir, bitterly as he had been reviled, would not make his father's dying room the scene of a broil, so he bowed his head at this expostulation, and folding his arms haughtily on his bosom, prepared to hear the will. A look of bitter triumph passed over the sick man's face: it seemed as if his passions had transformed him into a fiend.

"Proceed, sir," he said, nodding to the conveyancer.

The man unrolled his parchment and began repeating the formal language of the deed, and as clause after clause was read depriving the young heir of his just rights, the eyes of the

invalid gloated over the agony he knew he was inflicting on his victim. The son, in spite of every exertion, felt that his feelings were betraying themselves in the convulsive twitches of his face. How could he look unconcerned when his last hopes were being crushed, and he saw inevitable beggary before his sweet wife and babe, with the horrors of a jail, in prospect, for himself? But he closed his mouth firmly, choked back his emotions, and gazed sternly on the man of the law, ashamed that the lookers on should perceive his emotion.

When the conveyancer had finished the deed, he advanced to the bed-side with it, two servants carrying a small table on which were writing materials.

"Give me a pen, quick, quick," said the invalid, rising unsupported in bed.

The conveyancer hastened to obey, the parchment was spread out, and the pen was in the invalid's hand.

"Do you see this, sir?" he said, casting a look of triumphant malice at his son, and he placed the pen to the skin.

The storm, all this while, had been increasing in fury, and vivid flashes of electricity had begun of late even to penetrate through the closed shutters and heavy drapery of the windows. Just at this instant a peal was heard, stunning every one in the room which seemed filled with a blinding light. Several fell to their feet in fright, and the whole house appeared to rock. For a second there was a breathless silence, and then the conveyancer spoke.

"Father in heaven!" he exclaimed, in a tone of horror, and advancing to the bed, he added solemnly, "Sir James is dead!"

They rushed to his side and found it was indeed so. The lightning had run down the wall at the head of the bed, and in a second the soul of the baronet was in eternity. The parchment was shrivelled and black; while the pen, knocked three feet from the hand, lay burning on the rich counterpane.

A silence of horror chained every tongue. The death of the invalid, at that instant, seemed like a stroke of Providence.

At length the conveyancer turned to the son, and grasping his hand, said,

"As there is no will, Sir James, you are the sole heir. And from the bottom of my heart I congratulate you."

—
There is no happier woman now than the young Lady Hengist, for she is blest with a husband who adores her, and surrounded with a family of lovely children, who inherit the beauty and virtues of their parents.



SEPTEMBER, 1844.

THE DEAD GUEST.

A TALE FROM THE GERMAN OF ZSCHOKKE.

BY MRS. E. F. ELLET.

(CONCLUDED.)

THAT the narrative of the second appearance of the Dead Guest produced no little impression might be known from the fact that next day all the town were talking of him, and the centennial return of the period for his appearance. Many stories were told of this apparition, and though some stout-hearted persons laughed at the superstitious fears of the people, yet the number of the incredulous was so small as to have little effect on those who believed.

Waldrich was obliged to leave Herbesheim for some days on business connected with his regiment. He lamented to Frederika the necessity for his departure, and said he had never felt so unhappy before in parting from her, or so uncertain of seeing her again; telling her, moreover, how much his happiness depended on their meeting. The young girl endeavored to comfort him, by a promise of eternal constancy, beseeching him only to take care of his own health, which might suffer from the approaching winter weather. When he was gone, as it was in the evening, she returned to her chamber, sending word to her parents that she had a headache. The next morning her mother came to enquire after her, and found her with red eyes and pale cheeks.

"You are ill, my child!" she exclaimed—"why have you kept it from me? Am I no longer your mother?—I know that you love Waldrich; I do not count that a fault; but am grieved that you have any concealments from your mother."

Frederika threw her arms round her mother's neck and burst into tears. "I have done wrong," she cried, "in concealing it—yes—I love him—I have promised to be his wife. Forgive me—but I feared my father would be displeased."

"Child—I will not reproach you—nor blame you; it could not—I see—have been otherwise. Be calm, God will bless you if you trust in Him."

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George is worthy of you, though he has not the advantages of the one chosen by your father. I must inform him how matters stand."

"Not now—oh my mother, not now!"

"Yes—Frederika, now; the sooner the better."

"And what shall I do?"

"Do—my child? Pray silently to God. He will comfort you and give you strength; so that you will never go wrong. Do and say always what is right, and no evil can happen to you."

Madame Bantes went to seek her husband, and told him all that had passed between her daughter and Waldrich. At first he was inclined to be angry; but his wife convinced him that to offer opposition would be only to increase Frederika's inclination for the young captain, which might otherwise gradually die away in his absence, or be replaced in time by regard for the suitor her father had chosen. She reminded him that Waldrich could not remain much longer in Herbesheim. Herr Bantes was reasonable, and he not only agreed to the moderate course suggested by his wife, but assured his daughter that she had no compulsion to apprehend from him in the disposal of her hand. He only counselled her to be prudent in her choice, and to determine nothing till she had seen more of the world.

"Poor Waldrich!" said Frederika to her mother, as they sat one day at the window, just returned from church, and heard the rain beating against the panes: "he has very bad weather for his journey."

"A soldier should not heed the weather," said Madame Bantes; "should you ever be a soldier's wife you must make up your mind to have him love the field better than the hearth, and the king better than you."

"But look, mamma, how violently the rain beats—and there are hailstones too! See, how black the clouds are!"

Madame Bantes smiled, and said—"do you know, Frederika, this is the first Sunday in Advent?"

Just then Herr Bantes came in, laughing—but with a strange laugh, for one could hardly tell whether he meant it or not. "You are wanted

in the kitchen, wife," he cried, "to bring the servants to order, or our dinner will be spoiled."

"What is the matter?" asked his wife.

"The whole city is alive about the Dead Guest; two persons have just declared they have seen him; and their wild story is repeated from mouth to mouth, till the people in my kitchen have gone distracted. This is the first trick of the apparition, that we should go without our Sunday's dinner."

"Oh! that shall never be!" cried Frederika, and ran out.

"Such," continued Herr Bantes, "are the fruits of superstition! Advent and winter weather come at the due time, and everybody shrinks into a corner and crosses himself, and tells old woman's stories."

"Nay—my husband."

"Nay—wife—I believe you are a little credulous yourself!—but defend not such folly! When I die, I shall leave a legacy of ten thousand guilders, to form a school for teaching common sense; and all the dealers in ghosts and hobgoblins may come and learn. But the great have an object in nourishing superstition; the more credulous a people—the more easily kept in subjection. They will not learn better, till a Bonaparte comes again with iron rod, to play the pedagogue among the fools."

While Herr Bantes was speaking, walking the while impatiently up and down the room, and stopping when he had words to pour out, the book-keeper entered.

"Herr Bantes, it is all true," said he.

"What is true?"

"He is really arrived. He lodges at the Black Cross."

"Who lodges at the Black Cross?"

"The Dead Guest."

"Nonsense! Do you too, a reasonable man, believe all the old wives say?"

"I believe my own eyes; I went to the place myself; the clerk of the court accompanied me. We asked, for a pretence, for a glass of brandy. There he sat."

"Who?"

"I knew him on the spot; the landlord seemed also to know him; for as he came out with us he looked at the clerk with large eyes, and raised his eyebrows as if he would say—he who sits there brings no good."

"Absurd!"

"Well, it may be; but if it was not the Dead Guest it was his own twin brother! A pale face; a very tall figure; and dresses in black from head to foot; a double gold chain over his neck, and costly rings on his fingers; a fine equipage. What would you have more?"

Herr Bantes looked hard at the book-keeper for some minutes, and then burst in a loud laugh.

"Has the devil his joke to drive with us, that he must come in just with the first Sunday in Advent?"

"And just as church was out," added the book-keeper, "while the wind and rain were most violent, and the people were running along the streets to escape a drenching."

"What is the stranger's name?" asked Herr Bantes.

"I do not know," answered the book-keeper; "he gives himself such names as pleases him; now it is Herr von Grabern; now Count von Altenkreuz. But there is something significant in his stopping at the Black Cross: the name appears to suit him."

Herr Bantes was silent and thoughtful for a little while, at last he said—"It is accident—mere chance; believe not a syllable about the Dead Guest, and such fables. A singular accident, it is true; the time—the weather—the figure—dress—and so on. But it all follows naturally; you heard the story—you saw a stranger; no more now of spectres—as you are a reasonable man!"

Early in the evening, just as Herr Bantes had finished giving directions to some of his workmen, he was startled by hearing a scream from a female voice.

"Go, Paul," he said to one of the men, "and see what is the matter." Paul went, and returned in a few minutes, looking frightened, and answered in a trembling voice—"there is some one wanting to see you, sir."

"Let him come in," said Herr Bantes. Paul opened the door, and a stranger entered. He was a very tall, thin man, in a black dress; his face was not unpleasing, but of a singular paleness, increased by the contrast of a black silk cravat. The fineness and whiteness of the linen he wore was set off by his black silk vest. The dress altogether, with several rings on his fingers, showed him to be a person of respectable condition.

Herr Bantes stared at him in speechless astonishment; but he recovered his composure by an effort, and advanced to meet his visitor, saying at the same time to his workman—"remain, Paul, I have something further to say to you."

"I am delighted, Herr Bantes, to make your acquaintance," said the stranger deliberately. "I should have come to you this morning, but that I felt the need of some rest after my journey, and disliked to trouble you so immediately upon my arrival."

"Much honor—much obliged," faltered Herr Bantes in evident embarrassment. "But —."

A cold chill began to creep over him; he could hardly trust his eyes. He pointed the stranger to a seat, and wished him an hundred miles off.

The visitor bowed with some constraint, took the seat and said—"you do not know me, but can guess, no doubt, who I am?"

Herr Bantes felt the hair rising under his wig. He shook his head, and replied with forced calmness, "I have not the honor to know you."

"I am Hahn, the son of your old friend," said the guest in a hollow voice, and smiling; the smile went through the bones of his host.

"Have you a letter from my old friend?" asked he. The stranger opened an elegant pocket-book and handed him the letter. It recommended the bearer as the banker's son, and entreated Herr Bantes to help him in his first assault on the heart of the young lady his daughter. The writing indeed resembled that of the old banker, but there seemed something strange about it.

Herr Bantes read—and read—endeavoring to gain time for reflection; at length he jumped up, and said he must find his spectacles, for he could not read without them. Paul took advantage of his temporary absence from the room to abscond. When Bantes returned, bewildered as he was, he had adopted a desperate resolution. He approached his pale visitor, and said to him, with some hesitation, for his heart beat violently—"most worthy Herr von Hahn, I entertain for you the sincerest respect; but a circumstance, a fatal circumstance, has occurred, which I did not foresee. If you had only done us the honor to come earlier! Between my daughter and a captain in the army, at the head of the garrison in this town, there has been a love affair—in short, they are betrothed: I learned it only a day or two since. The captain is my foster son; he was my ward; willingly or unwillingly—I must give my consent. I was just going to write to your father, to beg him not to suffer you to trouble yourself. I am very sorry; what will my old friend think of me?"

Herr Bantes could say no more, for his voice failed him from terror. He had observed not only that his mysterious guest received his news with perfect calmness, but that he betrayed a visible pleasure at the words "love affair"—"betrothed;" and he remembered that the apparition had been always wont to seek out maidens affianced to others. He noticed also that the countenance quickly resumed its gloomy expression, as if he feared having betrayed himself.

"Do not distress yourself," replied he, "either on my account or my father's."

"I understand you!" thought Herr Bantes, and after a pause, said: "I ought not, indeed, to permit you to remain at the inn, but to beg you to

make my house your home. But this affair of the captain and my daughter—you understand how it is—another suitor in the absence of her betrothed—and so on—you comprehend—in so small a town—people would talk—more than they know. And my daughter."

"No excuses—I beg of you!" answered the banker's son, "I am very comfortable at the inn. I understand you; but permit me to pay my respects to Miss Mademoiselle Bantes."

"But—sir—"

"To have been in Herbesheim, and not to have seen the bride destined for me—I could not be satisfied."

"But you—"

"I should envy the captain. All that I have heard of the uncommon beauty and loveliness of your daughter."

"You are too kind."

"Caused me to look with pleasure on the prospect of being received into a near relation by the man of whom my father always spoke with such esteem."

"Your obedient—"

"May I hope, at least, for the honor of being presented to Miss Mademoiselle Bantes?"

"I am sorry—very sorry—but—she and my wife have company this evening; and the rule is that no stranger may be introduced."

"Indeed? I feel still exhausted by my journey, and unfit to present myself in company. I would rather see your daughter when only with her own family."

Herr Bantes made a stiff bow.

"Or rather, if you would permit me the favor. I would beg for a private interview with the young lady—to communicate to her something—"

Herr Bantes felt the blood curdle at his heart; he breathed quickly. The stranger was silent, expecting a reply; but as none was given he continued—"I hope what I have to say will show Mademoiselle Bantes my views; and enable me, perhaps, while I set her mind at ease with regard to the past, to gain her esteem, which under existing circumstances is far from being indifferent to me."

Herr Bantes, more and more bewildered—strove to say something in deprecation of the proposed interview; but his guest seemed not to understand him. Meantime it grew dark; he stood up, and with many expressions of regret, said that company was waiting for him. The stranger, who looked more gloomy than ever, then took his leave, asking permission to repeat his visit.

Herr Bantes hastened to the burgomasters, where he found his apprehensions confirmed by hearing that everybody talked of the arrival of

the Dead Guest. Thence he went home, and told all that had happened to his wife and daughter, who smiled when he mentioned his story of Frederika's betrothal to the captain.

"Oh, father—dear father!" cried the young lady—"you must keep your word!"

"I must!" replied her father in a tone of dismay.

"And if the guest should really be Mr. von Hahn!"

"Do you think I have no eyes? I tell you it is not he! How should young von Hahn disguise himself as the Dead Guest, when he probably has never in all his life heard the story?"

The two ladies seemed rather incredulous as to the apparition assuming the form of the young banker; at this Herr Bantes cried, "just so—he has you both already in his clutch; he has begun the work already! I am an enemy to superstition; but what has happened I have seen; I cannot understand it; but there is much that reason cannot understand. I will have no dealings with the evil one—on your part!"

"Dearest father!" cried Frederika, "have no fear. Be he Mr. von Hahn or the Dead Guest, I shall never be unfaithful to Waldrich, or listen to his suit. Only promise that you will not separate George and me."

Frederika slept sweetly, and had pleasant dreams that night.

The next morning Herr Bantes was returning from his business, and on going up the steps of his house, happened to glance into a window opening on the first floor. Could he believe his eyes? There sat the pale stranger he had seen the preceding evening in earnest conversation with Frederika. The young girl was smiling on him in what seemed an affectionate manner; and did not even resist when he raised her hand and pressed it to his lips.

All swam before the eyes of the old man, and with some difficulty he made his way into the house, and his wife's apartment. When Madame Bantes understood the cause of his alarm, she begged him to be composed; for that the guest was in reality the banker's son, a most excellent and amiable young man, with whom she and Frederika had been some time in conversation.

"But go in and see, wife, on what terms he is already with our daughter. He is kissing her!"

"Impossible!"

"Yes—yes—my eyes have not deceived me; she is lost! Why are they alone? has your reason deserted you?"

"He begged permission to make a private communication to Frederika."

"Break off his private communication; and send him away; I insist upon it."

"But what will his father say?"

"I care not what. Go—send him away."

Madame Bantes was embarrassed: she came up and laid her hand on her husband's shoulder. "Do not let your imagination mislead you!" said she. "If you command I must obey; but—Frederika and I have just invited him to dinner."

"To dinner! he must have bewitched you! Get away—I will not see him!" At this moment Frederika entered the room. "Where is Mr. von Hahn?" asked her mother.

"He is gone to the inn for a moment, but will be back directly. He is truly a good and noble man!"

"There we have it again!" cried her father: "he has made some way in half an hour's interview! And you were in love with Waldrich? I tell you—send away this stranger. Tell him I am ill; that we are very sorry; that we cannot have him to dinner."

Frederika was startled. "I will tell you, papa," she answered—"all that he said to me. He is certainly a most excellent man; and you will——"

"I will hear nothing! I have heard too much!" exclaimed her father. "Be he Mr. von Hahn or the Dead Guest, I will have no more of him! If you can, persuade this 'noble, excellent man' to quit Herbesheim directly—and forever. I give you my word that you shall have Waldrich, even should the real son of my friend come to claim you. I promise you to write to the banker the instant the dark man is gone."

Frederika colored with delight. "Very well," she answered, "he shall go. Let me only speak a few moments alone with him!"

"There it is again! No—no! you must write to him! Away with him!"

There was no withstanding this order; Frederika wrote a note to the banker's son, excusing herself from receiving him to dinner on account of her father's indisposition; and entreating him, if he had any friendship for her, to leave the town without delay; since on his speedy departure depended the peace of her family. She promised to write to him by the next post, and explain the cause of this singular, but most urgent request.

One of the servants carried the young lady's letter to the inn, and asked for the banker von Hahn. When the door of the room where the banker sat was opened, and he saw a tall, pale man, dressed in black, as he had heard the Dead Guest described, who looked up and asked in a hollow voice—"what do you want?" he was ready to swoon with fright.

"Your honor," stammered the man with a face

full of terror; "I did not ask for your honor—but for Mr. von Hahn."

"I am he."

"You?" repeated the petrified servant; and his feet seemed rooted to the ground. "For mercy's sake—let me go away!"

"I do not hinder you. Who sent you here?"

"Mademoiselle Bantes."

"For what?"

"This letter for you—" and as the stranger rose and came toward him to receive the letter he threw it down and ran away. The banker laughed. "Are the people here all crazy!" said he to himself. He read the letter, contracted his brow, and began to walk the room, humming a low tone.

There was a light knock at the door, and the landlord entered, his cap in his hand, with many awkward bows.

"Just in time, landlord; is dinner ready?" asked the guest.

"The dinner in this house would be doubtless too mean for your honor."

"Not at all; your cooking is well done. You should not find fault with my eating but little; it is my habit."

"They cook better at the Golden Angel."

"The Black Cross is good enough for me. You are more modest than I ever saw a landlord. Let them have dinner directly."

The landlord of the Black Cross rubbed his cap in his hands and seemed embarrassed; the stranger appeared not to notice it, but continued to walk the room in deep thought. But every time he came near the host the latter stepped a pace or two back.

"Do you want anything, landlord?" at length asked the banker.

"Ye—e—s! But your honor will not take it ill?"

"Not in the least; out with it!" cried the guest, and reached out his hand, as if he would slap his host cordially on the shoulder. But the landlord escaped by a timely dodge and sprang to the door.

Vexed as the banker was, for he had noticed the strange behaviour of the whole household since his arrival, he could not help bursting into a laugh. "Do the folk take me," thought he, "for a second Doctor Faust?"

Again there was a knock, and at the half opened door appeared a martial face, with a Roman nose and prodigious moustaches. The mouth asked, "Is this Mr. von Hahn?"

"The same."

A large and stout man in a soldier's dress entered the apartment. "The burgomaster requests your honor," said he, "to come to him for a few moments."

"The burgomaster? a master of police. Where does he live?"

"At the end of the street—in the large corner house with the balcony. I will have the honor to conduct you thither."

"Nay—that is not necessary, my good friend. I like not military escorts."

"His honor the burgomaster has so ordered."

"Very good—and you obeyed his directions. Have you not been a soldier?"

"In the third regiment of hussars."

"In what action got you that scar over the eye-brow?"

"Hem—your honor—in a fray with some of my comrades about a pretty girl."

"Your wife will not be pleased—unless she herself were the girl you fought for."

"I have no wife."

"Well—your sweet-heart. Come—confess—if she knew all—you would find her a little stubborn—eh?"

The soldier frowned. The guest continued—"but do not lose heart; for your scar would prove to her what you would venture for a look into her dark eyes, or a lock of her brown hair."

The policeman grew pale and opened his eyes. "Does your honor," he stammered, "know the girl?"

"Why not? she is not the ugliest in the town!" returned the banker smiling, amused at having discovered the soldier's love secret so readily. The smile and the pale face had something horrible to the poor lover.

"Your honor knows her? And you only arrived yesterday; and I have watched the milliner's door ever since! Impossible! you could not have got in!"

"My good friend it is not difficult to make acquaintance with a pretty girl; and houses have back-doors."

The soldier looked horrified; von Hahn thought he had awakened his jealousy. "Fy," said he, "you must not be jealous; let us make an agreement. Understand me well—"

"But too well!" interrupted the terrified official.

"You shall take me to your young milliner, and I will reconcile her to your scar."

The soldier started and appeared to shudder; then recollecting himself, requested Mr. von Hahn to follow him to the burgomaster.

"I come; but I will have none of your company."

"I am ordered to conduct you."

"I order the contrary. Go, then, and announce me to his honor. If you withstand me count no longer upon your sweet-heart."

"For heaven's sake," cried the official, "have

mercy! I obey: gracious sir, spare, I beseech you, spare the innocent blood!"

"I hope you do not think I am going to eat the girl?"

"Your word," cried the other, "that you will spare her life; then I will do whatever you command, were I sure it was my own death!"

"I give you my word not to kill her. But tell me, what frightens you? How come you to suppose I want the life of a handsome girl?"

"Your word is pledged; I am satisfied. What indeed would it profit you to twist poor Katherle's neck! You may go alone, now. Even the devil must keep his word."

So saying, the policeman retired, but not too soon to hear the Dead Guest burst into a loud laugh. The laughter rang through his ears like the howl of Satan as he ran at his utmost speed to the burgomaster, to tell him the whole story.

Mr. von Hahn took his hat and stick and went out. As he walked along the street he observed that everybody was bent on paying him the utmost respect. All the people bowed and took off their hats; and in several houses on both sides of the way he saw a throng of faces pressed against the closed windows. Not far from the house of the magistrate where he was going, was a spring, the water of which fell through several pipes into a large stone basin. Around this were many women with pails and tubs, differently occupied. Some were scraping fish; some washing vegetables; some placing their pails under the pipes; others carrying them away on their heads. The banker wishing to enquire if that were the house he was looking for, turned to address one of them; but at the first sound of his voice, which drew their attention, there was a cry of horror and alarm! The women threw down their pails, let the vegetables and fish fall into the basin, and ran off in different directions. Only an old woman, whose feet refused to carry her away, got behind the pipe, and began crossing herself most violently, and muttering her prayers. Mr. von Hahn went on and was admitted into the corner house with the balcony. The burgomaster, a small man, acute, adroit, and of quick perception, received him courteously at the door, and led him into his office.

"You sent for me," said Mr. von Hahn, "and I have come the more willingly, in the hope that you may be able to solve this mystery. I arrived in your town yesterday for the first time; and have met with more adventures here than in all the rest of my travels."

"I believe it," returned the burgomaster with a smile, "I have heard of them; really incredible! You are Mr. von Hahn, son of a banker in the capital; you have transactions with Bantes,

a manufacturer of this place; you come on account of his daughter——"

"Exactly; will you identify me, sir?" The banker took some papers out of his pocket-book; the burgomaster examined them slightly, and handed them back with an expression of his satisfaction.

"I have given you, sir, all the information you can require respecting myself; permit me to ask in my turn some explanation of the odd ways of your town. Herbesheim is not so entirely separated from the rest of the world but that strangers must sometimes make their appearance here. How comes it then, that I——"

"I know what you would say, Mr. von Hahn, I will explain all if you will have the goodness to answer me a few questions."

"At your service."

"Count my questions, if you please, among the singularities of Herbesheim, which have already struck you. Do you commonly wear black?"

"I am in mourning for an aunt."

"Were you ever in this place before?"

"Never."

"Have you had any acquaintances among our townspeople, or have you ever heard by accident any of the legends connected with the town history?"

"I have no acquaintances in Herbesheim, and knew nothing of the place, further than that Herr Bantes lived here, and that his daughter was a very admirable young lady, which I can now confirm from my own observation."

"Have you never heard the story of the Dead Guest?"

"I repeat it—I must confess to my shame, Mr. Burgomaster, that the history of Herbesheim is as unknown to me as that of the kingdoms of Siam and Peru."

The burgomaster smiled and said—"you are now passing with our citizens for the spectre of a fabulous legend; I myself, ridiculous as I own the popular superstition to be—you will forgive my frankness—cannot help being surprised to see how exactly you correspond with the general notion of the spectre's exterior. Supposing it true that you are not playing off a joke upon me, I will relate to you the story of the Dead Guest as I have heard it from others."

The worthy burgomaster did so, and young von Hahn listened with the greatest interest.

"All is clear to me now," cried he, laughing, when the story was ended. "The fair ones of Herbesheim were in terror for their pretty necks."

"Jesting aside, Mr. von Hahn, I am not quite satisfied. Accident plays us strange tricks sometimes; but it is too strange in this case not to give me some ground of suspicion against you."

"How, Mr. Burgomaster, do you take me for the hero of your legend?"

"No, certainly; but you may have heard it before, and thought proper to divert yourself with the credulity of our people. How, for instance, happens it that you chose the first Sunday in Advent for your arrival, and a violent storm, if you knew nothing of the tradition in question?"

"The coincidence is somewhat striking, I acknowledge; but I assure you I am so ill read in the calendar that it is only just now that I remember yesterday was the first Sunday in Advent. And I can give you my oath that I did not bring the rain from heaven; on the contrary, I would gladly have prevented it, unfavorable as the bad weather is to my health."

"But how, Mr. von Hahn, do you account for the clutch you made this morning at the neck of your worthy landlord?"

The banker laughed immoderately. "Ah! this is why the poor fellow dodged me so fearfully when I wanted to lay my hand on his shoulder."

"Still further, Mr. von Hahn: you are acquainted with Mademoiselle Wiesel?"

"I know several Wiesels, but no young lady of that name."

"And yet it is said that you obtained access to her house by the back-door."

"By the back-door? Oh, now I understand; she is the sweet-heart of your late messenger. Now I comprehend all his fright and agitation."

"I have not yet done, Mr. von Hahn. You will observe that I am acquainted with all your movements; indeed the secret police of Herbesheim yields not even to that of Paris in the times of Fouché and Savary. If you wish me to acquit you entirely of the charge of having played off a joke upon our good people of Herbesheim, you must permit me a question or two further. If you did not design to assume the character of the Dead Guest, how was it possible—this question I ask less for my own satisfaction than another's—how was it possible that having no previous acquaintance with Mademoiselle Bantes, you could this morning in a few minutes' interview—a short interview at least—become so intimate with that young lady, that you—I know not how I ought to express it——"

"How the mischief did you learn that?" cried the banker, and his pale face became suddenly suffused with crimson.

"I beg pardon for my curiosity," returned the burgomaster, "you know civil authorities and doctors have the privilege of asking indiscreet questions. But you are aware that the Dead Guest is said to have the faculty of captivating women; a faculty which I am obliged to concede

to you without, however, believing you to have been dead."

The banker was silent awhile, and then said—"I begin to be more afraid of you, Mr. Burgomaster, than even your townspeople are of my black coat. The walls must have given you your information. It is true I was this morning a short time alone with Mademoiselle Bantes, if you mean to allude to that circumstance: but you must allow me on this point to preserve silence. Either your walls have informed you upon the subject of our conversation or not; in the former case you have nothing more to learn; in the latter it would not become me to disclose what the young lady might wish to have concealed."

The burgomaster inclined his head gently in token that he would pursue his enquiries no further; and after a slight pause, asked—"do you stay long with us, Mr. von Hahn?"

"I leave here in the morning. My business is concluded; and really I have no inclination to play the part of a hobgoblin among the people. I conceive myself ill-used by chance to have been brought thus unconsciously into such a scrape."

After a little more conversation with the burgomaster the banker took his leave. The magistrate, after his departure, stationed himself at the window, curious to see the reception he might meet with from persons in the street. He could not help thinking the affair a very odd one altogether. He had stood thinking of it a quarter of an hour or more, and was surprised that he had not yet seen the banker leave his house. He rang the bell; the servant came and was questioned; but insisted that though he had stood for the last hour before the front door, he had seen no man go out.

The burgomaster dismissed his servant and went again to the window. In a few minutes the attendant returned, uncalled, and said the housemaid was crying in the kitchen, because the Dead Guest was talking with her young mistress, the burgomaster's daughter. The young lady seemed well acquainted with him; he had given her a pair of splendid bracelets, and said something to her which the maid could not hear. Her mistress had ordered her to leave the room.

"Bracelets!" echoed the magistrate, "and talking with my Minna! Donner und—how should the girl get acquainted so readily with a stranger?" And he walked hastily to the door, then checked himself as if he had detected a superstitious fear at the bottom of his astonishment. At length he went to the room where his daughter was; she sat alone at the window looking at the bracelets.

"What have you there, Minna?" asked her father.

The young girl answered readily—"a present for Rika Bantes, from Master von Hahn. He is going away to-morrow, and has his reasons for not returning to the house of Herr Bantes. It is all very strange—but I will give her his present."

"And where did you become acquainted with Mr. von Hahn?"

"This morning when I was with Rika and her mother. He has an odd look, but he is an excellent man. When he came from you, father, I was just coming down stairs; and he stopped to make his request."

The burgomaster was satisfied with his daughter's explanation, but secretly resolved to send next morning and see if the stranger kept his word.

The next morning when the burgomaster's servant went to the Black Cross, he learned from the people in the street that the Dead Guest and all his train were vanished, no one knew how or where. He had taken neither carriage nor horses; had not been seen to pass the town gates, and yet he was no where to be found. The landlord took the police messenger into the chamber occupied by his late guest; all was in complete order as if no one had been there; the bed was unruffled; the chairs in their places; not an article of clothing, nor even a bit of paper testified that the room had been recently inhabited. Only on the table lay the full amount of the reckoning in good silver.

"May I be hanged if I touch it!" cried the horrified landlord; "I will send it to the town hospital for the poor."

The rumor of the sudden disappearance of the Dead Guest was soon spread abroad throughout Herbesheim. Herr Bantes and his wife, even before they had risen, heard it from the maid—"Amazing!" cried the old man: "what say you to that, wife? For my part I am glad he is gone. He—the son of my old friend! Yet who could credit such things if they had not been seen with one's living eyes?"

Madame Bantes smiled, but knew not what to reply. She thought, however, that time might unravel even this mystery.

Suddenly her husband sprang up, and became so pale that she was alarmed—"wife!" he said in a faint voice, "is it not strange that Frederika sleeps so long? Have you heard any noise in her room since you awaked?"

"Nay—dear husband; you cannot suspect—"

"If the one thing is true—the other may be also!" cried the alarmed father; and therewith both went to the door of Frederika's chamber. Herr Bantes laid his trembling hand on the lock and opened softly; he could hear no movement,

though he listened breathlessly. They went up to the bed. There lay the lovely girl still asleep, a delicate bloom in her cheeks, on which the long eye-lashes reposed. She breathed so lightly that her father at first almost thought he only fancied there was a regular movement of her night dress. But when he touched her soft, warm hand, he was fully re-assured; and still more when she opened her eyes and smiled with an expression of surprise. Madame Bantes explained the cause of their early visit, telling her of the mysterious disappearance of Herr von Hahn, at which she seemed much pleased.

Still more pleased was she that evening, when just as they were sitting down to supper, the roll of a carriage was heard which stopped before their door. "It is Waldrich!" cried Frederika, springing up; and it was he. They all ran to meet him; Herr Bantes embraced him cordially. All had a thousand things to tell, and a thousand questions to ask. At last Herr Bantes put an end to the discourse by calling them to supper, and gave the captain his accustomed seat.

"Do you know," said he, after they had chatted awhile; "do you know, captain, we have had the Dead Guest here in Herbesheim, bodily, in this very house! Yes—I tell you truly—he picked out his three brides before he had been in the place twenty-four hours; one was Frederika there—another the Burgomaster's daughter, the third Miss Wiesel, the milliner's apprentice. We were all terrified nearly out of our wits."

The captain smiled and answered: "I met him to-day, and dined in his company at the post-house at Odernberg. You mean Mr. von Hahn, and no other?"

"Von Hahn!" repeated Herr Bantes; "the Dead Guest—if he ever walked the earth! But he shall not have my Frederika—even were he in truth the banker's son! How could I live with a son-in-law that gave me a cold shudder every time I looked upon him. If he be really von Hahn the worse for him, for he looks exactly as you described the spectre."

"And no fault of his!" cried the captain, laughing; "for believe me he was the veritable original of the sketch I drew the other evening. I met him some time ago in the capital, and his uncommonly tall figure, pale face and black dress made such an impression upon me that I could not forget him. You may imagine that I was not more likely to forget when I learned that he was—pardon me for referring to it!—the suitor of Mademoiselle Frederika."

"Donner!" exclaimed Herr Bantes, rubbing his forehead, "and so it was all the trick of a rival! And we all, even the worthy Burgomaster and his police, have been taken in. Such a

welcome as he met with!—He must have taken us for a pretty set of fools!"

"Not at all, my dear sir," answered Waldrich, "he was well pleased with the turn of affairs, and desired me to present his parting respects to you, Madame Bantes and Mademoiselle Frederika. He and I are sworn friends; we have opened our hearts to each other. At first, when we sat down tête-à-tête to the table, both were reserved; after an exchange of common-place civilities I learned that he had just left Herbesheim on his return home. I burned with curiosity to know more; and having accidentally mentioned that I was in command of the garrison, 'ah,' cried he, laughing, 'my fortunate rival!' and reached me his hand across the table. Thus our conversation commenced. He told me that your daughter had informed him she was engaged to me, and had entreated him not to make her unhappy. In a transport he had seized her hand and kissed it, disclosing the fact that although he had implicitly obeyed the command of his father to come to Herbesheim to sue for her hand, yet it had been in the hope of being refused. He was secretly enamored of a young lady in the capital, the daughter of a late professor, whom the old banker had forbidden him, under pain of being disinherited, to visit—because the poor girl had no other dower but her virtues and talents. Young von Hahn, however, had resolved to marry her in case of his father's death, or if he could induce him to change his determination."

"What!" exclaimed Herr Bantes, "and you knew all this, Frederika? And why did you not tell it to me?"

The young lady kissed her father's hand and replied. "Dear papa, do not blame your Frederika! I was on the point of telling you all that had passed—every word the banker had said—but do you not remember how you forbade me to speak, and promised if I would obey you without a word, to give me Waldrich instead of Mr. von Hahn? You remember?"

"So—so! nothing is so sure as obedience when a little advantage may be gained by it."

"But did you not threaten to shut mamma and me in the cellar—if——"

"Hold your tongue, child! But since you took it upon yourself to have an interview with the young man without my knowledge, you might, at least, have explained matters."

"So I did. As soon as he found there was no hope of winning my heart, in the joy of his release he told me his own secret. Yet there was just then no excuse for his not remaining with us; and you know mamma and I had invited him to dinner——"

"Silence! Go on, captain. So he is not angry

with us. But what must he think of us good people of Herbesheim? That we took leave of our senses with the beginning of Advent?"

"Something of the sort may have occurred to him," answered the captain; "but the behaviour of the townspeople must have afforded him much amusement, for he told me of several droll scenes. Not till he heard the burgomaster's story did he comprehend that he had the honor to pass for a cavalier, who was taken for the Winter King two centuries ago. But he could not help acknowledging that his appearance favored the mistake."

"It was all the fault of your wild stories!" cried Frederika.

"Well, I was honest enough to confess my sin to Mr. von Hahn, and to take all the blame I deserved, though I certainly never dreamed of such a consequence to my narration. On his part he owned to me that he had yielded to the temptation of mystifying the good townspeople after he discovered what they thought of him. After retiring to his chamber, he sent his servants with his baggage under cover of the dark evening out of the town, and walked himself to the next post-house, where he lodged and took carriage this morning. In short, we had a hearty laugh at the whole story, and over a flask of champagne pledged a lasting friendship for each other."

All this while Herr Bantes seemed a little dissatisfied with himself; but Frederika tried, by caressing him, to remove the disagreeable impression. "Children," at last he said, "you see now what folly grows out of superstition, since even an old philosopher like myself has put on the cap and bells! I could laugh at it, were it not wrong to make light of the infirmities of poor human nature. Every one who thinks he stands firm should take heed lest he fall. (Wife, have a bowl of punch made that we may wash down the recollection of this silly stuff!) Thus the most courageous soldier, used to hearing balls by the dozen whistling about his ears, sometimes takes to his heels; the seaman who is at home in all countries may sometimes lose his way in a walk for pleasure; and the most sensible man in the world, at one time or other, may be little better than a fool!"

"Dear father!" cried Frederika, caressingly, "let us begin to talk of something else."

"Apropos, captain," continued her father, "do you know I gave you away? On condition that the Dead Guest should take himself off I made a present of you to Frederika. There, my girl, take him, and may you be happy together."

The lovers sprang up and threw themselves on his neck.

"Stay—Waldrich!" he cried, "you must throw off the uniform."



ISABEL PERCIVAL.

BY EMILY H. MAY.

"I will," said the captain, with tears of joy in his eyes.

"And take leave of the army. Frederika must live with her parents; I have given you to her, not her to you."

"I will resign to-morrow."

"Children," cried Herr Bantes, while he freed himself from the embraces of the young people—"your joy will quite suffocate me. Wife, let us have the punch!"



It was a beautiful day in July, and a gay party of both sexes was collected on the banks of the Wissahickon, occupied with the various amusements of a pic-nic. Some were dancing to the enlivening music of Johnson's band, some were sailing on the romantic stream, some had wandered off in pairs, and beneath a clump of secluded trees was a little group of laughing girls who appeared to have formed a circle of themselves. While in the midst of their mirth two young men passed by unobserved, the thick foliage shrouding them from the sight of the speakers.

"Marry for love! pshaw!" said a beautiful girl, "who thinks of such folly now? It might do for our grandmothers——"

"Oh! Isabel, how can you say so?" said a mild, loveable creature, usually the most silent of the party.

"I forgot, Mary, you were here," said Isabel laughingly. "You know we can never agree on this sentimental subject. Well—don't let us quarrel—you may take love and poverty, in other words a husband always in the way and cold potatoes for dinner, but give me a magnificent establishment if I must submit to the slavery of matrimony."

Isabel Percival did herself injustice as she thus spoke; but she often, on this subject, like many of our sex, professed sentiments she did not feel. In society she was chiefly known as the belle and the wit; but there were a few better acquainted with the sterling qualities of her character, though they often had to regret this weakness. Her closest friend, the amiable Mary Stewart, had expostulated with her, more than once, on this habit; but Isabel, though perhaps feeling the justice of the reproof, turned it off with a laugh. And Mary had foretold, in return, that Isabel would sometime deeply regret this affected levity. Alas! had Isabel known that, at this very moment, the lover to whom she was betrothed was one of the two gentlemen passing by, and that he overheard her remark, she might have felt, more keenly, the look of silent reproach which Mary gave her in answer to her gay remark.

Yes! Edward Harper heard the light, scornful reply of Isabel, and his heart was deeply wounded. He was one of the most sensitive of men, and though wealthy, felt none the less acutely the remark of his betrothed. It was lucky for him that his companion was ignorant of his engagement, which as yet was a secret. Edward turned deadly pale; but he soon recovered himself, and walking onward with his friend plunged recklessly into a strain of the gayest conversation.

It was unfortunate, perhaps, for Edward that he was so sensitive; but though he knew Isabel's habit of professing opinions she did not entertain, he did not believe she would speak thus lightly on a subject so serious. "If she really believes thus," he reasoned to himself, "her love for me is altogether mercenary. And if she does not believe it, how can there be any strength in her affection, if she thus slanders it."

When Edward met Isabel again there was a constraint in his manner that he could not overcome, and which attracted her observation. Little did she think of the cause! But she made no remark on it, thinking it would pass off, or that, if it did not, he might get pleased again at his convenience, since she had given him no offence. Proud, proud Isabel. The consequence was that she, in turn, became constrained; and this increased the coldness of Edward's manner. How often are the seeds of lasting differences sown in occurrences even more light!

"I will endure this torture no longer," said Edward, a few days subsequently, and after several interviews with Isabel, every one of which had been more constrained than the last; "I cannot be happy until I know that Isabel does not think as she professed to her companions. And yet how can I discover? I have it," he said, after several minutes of thought, "I will pretend to have lost my fortune, and renounce her. If she releases me, I shall know that her love is mercenary; but if—ah! then I may again be happy," he said with a faint smile.

The next morning, as Isabel sat with her head pensively leaning on her hand, wondering if in any way she had thoughtlessly offended her lover, and almost resolving, in spite of her pride, frankly to ask an explanation, the following letter was put into her hands.

"MISS PERCIVAL—

You will see me no more. The universal bankruptcy of the times has spared none; and, instead of being possessed of a competent fortune, I am now without a cent, having, this morning, conveyed away my whole property to meet certain unavoidable claims brought on me by my friendship to others. I am now without a cent. Brought up, as we both have been, in comparative luxury, it would be criminal for me now to insist on the fulfilment of our mutual vows. Your fortune is small, and scarcely sufficient for your own support. Your tastes are gay, I may add, expensive. We must, therefore, part. In this world those who love must accustom themselves to disappointments; and half the marriages are the result, very properly, of other considerations than those of affection. I spare myself the pain of a parting interview.

Farewell,
EDWARD HARPER.

"Cruel, unfeeling man!" exclaimed Isabel.

"And is it thus he casts off a heart that has

loved him too well?" She perused the letter again. "And is it thus, too, under the guise of regard for my comfort," she said indignantly, "that he conceals his wish to be released from our engagement in order that he may marry one richer than I? Oh! false—false. In what shall I trust hereafter?" and overcome by her feelings, she burst into a passion of tears.

Again and again Isabel perused that fatal letter. But she did not alter her opinion of the sentiments which had dictated it. There was something so cold and unfeeling in its tone, convincing her, especially when she called to mind the constraint of Edward during the preceding week, that he no longer loved her.

"Had he but continued to do so," she said, "nothing could have induced me to desert him. Oh! what pleasure it would have been to me to soothe his sorrows. Poverty would have been dearer to me than wealth, for then, deserted by the gay world, we should have been all in all to each other. But we should not have been so poor either," she continued. "My own fortune, though small, is, I have heard my guardian say, sufficient for a comfortable maintenance, and sure Edward, who was bred a lawyer, might earn something by following his profession. But why indulge in these idle speculations?" and the proud girl again burst into tears. "He has heartlessly deserted me: but he shall never know," she added quickly, "the suffering it has cost me."

Edward waited in vain for a reply to his letter. That day and the next passed without an answer, and then he came to the conclusion that Isabel did not love him. On the third day they met accidentally in the street. He bowed with constraint: she returned the acknowledgment coldly; and, from that hour, it was long before they saw each other again. Fatal mistake on both sides! Had Isabel never lightly affected mercenary motives in her love, or had Edward not precluded all reply by the haughty tone of his note, they might have been happy.

And each suffered more than they were willing to acknowledge even to themselves. Edward strove in vain to forget Isabel. There were many fair ones, wealthy and accomplished, who still, notwithstanding the rumor of his loss of fortune, would have been glad to accept the hand of one so well-born, and so distinguished, for he had begun to practice law, and was already rapidly rising to eminence, though he lived in but an ordinary way in order to appear to depend wholly on his exertions for support, leaving his fortune to accumulate until he should find a wife he could love, and who would love him for himself, when it was his intention publicly to resume his large possessions. But their smiles could not

eradicate the image of Isabel from his heart. In spite of her conduct, the remembrance of her continually rose up before him clothed with so many sweet and endearing associations that he was as much in love as ever. And Isabel!—how fared she? Immediately after the desertion of her lover she had gone to Boston, but her friends often heard from her, and it was difficult to say whether Edward's emotions were those of pleasure or regret when he learned her declining health. Her society still continued to be courted as much as ever, but she had, according to rumor, declined more than one advantageous offer. At length it was reported that she was engaged to a wealthy and high-born gentleman of that city, by the name of Stanhope.

Two years had now elapsed since the separation of Edward and Isabel, when, one day in the height of the season, the former stopped at Saratoga. Late in the evening he was returning to his hotel, when he saw a couple engaged in deep conversation, who had apparently just emerged from the ball-room. He came upon them so suddenly at the angle of the house, that, after the first word, delicacy forbade him to advance, and he could scarcely retreat without arresting attention; so the only thing left for him to do was to stand in the shadow of a neighboring column, till the party moved away. The gentleman had just finished speaking, and, after a slight hesitation, the lady replied. The first tone of that voice thrilled through every vein of the unwilling listener, for it was that of Isabel Percival.

"I will answer you, Mr. Stanhope," she said, "with the frankness your generous nature deserves. You have told me you love me; and I reply that I cannot return your affection because I *once loved another*. I have seen, with regret, your preference for me, and had hoped you would spare us both the pain of this hour. For that purpose I left Boston. But you have followed me here, and perhaps it is for the best that you should know all."

There was a short silence, and then the gentleman spoke, in a voice quivering with emotion.

"I acquit you, dear Miss Percival, of all trifling. You have never shown me encouragement. It has been my own folly. But is there no hope? You say you once loved another: you have always looked sad: is—is the object of that affection no more, and does it preclude any second passion?"

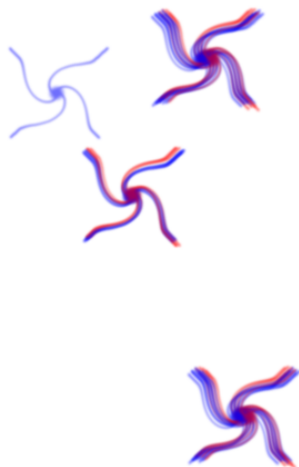
"You deserve perfect frankness," was the reply, "for I can truly say your really noble character has filled me with sentiments of the highest esteem. But you will know the hopelessness of your suit, and do justice to my conduct, when I tell you that I once loved, and believed it was returned. The gentleman was

then wealthy, but subsequently became poor. He refused, after this, to fulfil his vows; for he, perhaps, wished a richer bride. But I had loved him long and with all a woman's first, uncalculating affection. Unjust, mercenary as he was, I love him still."

A deep sigh was the gentleman's answer. Then he said, in a voice of commiseration, "my dear Miss Percival, let me be your friend. You do not wish to rejoin that gay crowd: I will accompany you to the private door, by which you may gain your room unobserved."

The conversation and the departure of the two, passed by Edward like a dream. He was amazed, bewildered, and then conscience-stricken. Often, of late, an uneasy fear had perplexed him lest his note to Isabel might have been too haughty; and now the truth broke on him. He slept little that night, but, next morning, before Isabel could know of his arrival, sent her a note explaining all, begging forgiveness for the past and soliciting an interview. What passed there our readers may imagine. It is enough for this narrative to record that, in the autumn, Isabel and Edward met at the altar, and that she had recovered her health and possessed more than her early beauty.

But they had learned one lesson they never forget, and thenceforth a full and mutual confidence was theirs.





LUCY MAY;

OR, A MIDNIGHT REVERY.

I AM sitting alone in my solitary yet comfortable chamber. My fire burns brightly, and the noiseless lamp, whose smoke-wreaths gambol round my head, shall as yet know no extinguisher. Why should I sleep? Has activity—corporeal, locomotive, blood-compelling activity earned me a night of unbroken rest? Have I toiled at the anvil, or driven the nail, or shivered with trenchant hand the red and intractable brick? Have I with busy arm and knitted brow plied any one of the thousand useful avocations of labor that earn unpurchaseable sleep? No—not I. Nor is the brown blood of Java that so cheerfully simmers on my bachelor hearth an opiate for one who boasts not the *dura ilia messorum*.

Blest be coffee at night! How fresh, vigilant and vigorous the fancy soars! How brightly and sharply start forth the half obliterated memories that crowd the soul: some clear, distinct and palpable—perfect in association and connection, and fancy-woven with all that is glorious and beautiful in the past; some shadowy and faint in the far distance of time, linked by strange bands one with another; and some without glory to dazzle, or cloud to darken, or fanciful association to distract, in stern and unalterable reality stand before the mind's eye, the beacons and landmarks of the soul.

From the store-house of the memory, where a record ineffaceable and eternal is made of all that the senses ever felt or the mind ever thought, many a forgotten feeling, wayward fancy or pleasant incident of early days comes forth in quaintly chequered array with the grave recollections of manhood. The sad and the gay—the light and the solemn—the painful and the pleasant—the good and the evil, and all that is wild, or strange, or whimsical, starts up, and like the shadowy kings pass in fantastic review before us.

Why should I sleep? my waking dreams are brightest. Shall I not now, when the last hieroglyphic is scrawled on yon blotted sheet of interlined and folded foolscap—when the absorbing business of the day is over, and all is done that can be done to insure that success for which I hope on the morrow—spread the wings of my fancy, cramped and stiffened and torn, though they be like the shattered pinions of Balazen, and turn in retro-volant flight to the times of my youth. This hour of the night—the sacred hour of midnight is to me amid my labors what the feebly living plants of his parlor window are to the heart of the drudging denizen of a great town. It freshens my soul to my task by affording glimpses

of what the citizen as well as myself may almost forget—the free verdure of nature and the softer feeling of the human heart.

To-night until ten o'clock I pored over and noted from musty tomes of professional lore. You would laugh at the technical question without right and without wrong which employed me. To-morrow I must be at the like again—and the next day the same, and the next, and the next. The interest of such pursuits is deep, strong and abiding, and I shrink not from the toil—but at times I grow weary and long for the free scope of natural feeling. With no home but that in which kindness is bought with money—with no friends but those who will always gather round a prosperous man, with no ties of family or kindred, is it strange that at this musing hour I should feel lonely? Money buys me luxury, civility, attention. Acquaintance I have enough who will lend me money, of the return of which they are sure—who will cheerfully do me a favor if it gives them no trouble—who will speak of me fairly and kindly—but (and let every one's own heart answer the question) are these things enough? I have books, rooms, furniture, employment, wealth, but who loves me?

"Why do you not marry, Mr. A——?" says my landlady, a respectable maiden of forty-three, gentle, good and bitterly ugly.

"Who shall I take?" is my stereotyped and socratic answer.

"Why, there's Miss B——."

"Entirely too tall."

"Miss C——."

"Too short."

"Miss D——, then."

"Pshaw! old enough to be your mother."

"Fie, now—there's Miss E——."

"She would call me father by mistake when my back was toward her."

"Then take Miss F——, with her bright eyes and mature age."

"She is too—too smart."

"Well, perhaps it is best to avoid contrasts—I give you Miss G—— as a last chance."

"They say she can't read, don't they?"

And thus or in a similar manner ends the exhortation.

"You are too fastidious, Mr. A——," she continues in affected pique.

"How can I be otherwise with such an angel?"

"Now hold your tongue, Mr. A——," and so we are friends again.

I feel that I *am* growing fastidious—fastidious in my estimation of books—of men—of art, and most of all—of women. In each a faint and unassignable deficiency pains, even when there are no grosser traits to disgust. Is it that our dim

and wavering though beautiful conceptions of the good, and perfect, and fair, have no embodiment in actual existence? Forms of moral and physical perfection are ever present in our minds, like shadowy remembrances of a former and better life. They hover round about us in our lonely walks, in our silent chambers, and in the dark hours of night. Who has not deemed at some time that the vision was realized, the airy child of fancy fixed in earthly form and proportions? Who has not once beheld the incarnation of his dreams of the lovely and the good? Many years since I beheld such a being, loved her warmly, and was cruelly disappointed—and now when time has dispelled the illusion of fancy, I smile at the ephemeral nature of what I then thought eternal.

But there is one remembrance too fair and beautiful, perhaps, for this page, commenced in mockery and like to end in sadness—it is no record of passion and sorrow, (miserable but eternal conjunction!)—pensive in nothing but the doubting thought that what was so soft, innocent and lovely then, may now be hard, worldly and heartless as many another as fair. Why should memory, leaping back in the track of life over much of absorbing interest, hover round her alone? Why pass over many as bright, as beautiful, and one more passionately loved?

I knew her when I was very young—she, younger still. With her idea comes no painful thought of folly committed, feeling mocked, motive misunderstood, or devotion scorned. No word of hers ever turned on me the accursed laugh of society, planting a barb that cannot be shown or extracted. She mocked not the uncouth form, the humble garments, or the hesitant voice. I, who had then never analysed a feeling, loved the sight of her as I loved the warm sun. It was in my day of studentship. I read law with one now no more. My preceptor, a man of retiring habits, had but few personal friends, so we were without the loungers who are the curse of a lawyer's life. I had possession of one corner of an office of moderate size—where side by side on my little brown table were ranged my books—trusty friends for life!—a few volumes of the classics, the elementary tomes of law; and, more prized than either, a quarto black-letter translation of solemn old Ensebius, with the lamentations of Origen included.

I used to sit at my baize protected window in the warm, summer evenings, and peep at the happy faces and bright forms in the street. They seemed so joyous, so light that I, son of toil and thought, almost deemed them of another nature. Sometimes a bright eye would blaze upon me—then for days I watched for its owner tripping along the pavement. Sometimes at dusk I crept

forth for a walk on the public pavement thronged with the young, the gay, the beautiful and the happy. Book in hand I threaded the glittering maze of pleasure seekers, glancing furtively at each fair form, and treasuring up the casual look of some temporary idol who swept in her glory by, doubtless in the pride of youth and beauty, seeing and thinking naught of her humble admirer. Yet would I home to my quiet lodgings, (I have dwelt from childhood among strangers,) and there in wild verse never to meet human eye attempt the embodiment of my feelings.

Too full of mortification and shame for inditement here, are the passionate follies of maturer years. Diminutive in person, homely in aspect, speering in speech, and humble in fortune and connection, what had I to hope from the lovely, the wealthy and the proudly born.

I had flown my falcon at noble game. With the caprice of beauty and conscious attraction she smiled on my rude devotion—nay, more, permitted me to hope that when I had gained name and station, I might aspire to her regard; and I, how strange it seems now, would—aye! have kissed the dust she trod upon. Many a night when storm or darkness or cold precluded observation, have I paced for hours before the doors of her father's house.

For her I toiled—for her I strove to master the subtleties of my profession—for her I gave up the gaiety of youth and the society of friends. What to me was the voice of pleasure in whose ear was ever ringing the memory of tones sweeter than the harp of seraphim? What to me was the companionship of others whose soul was filled with glorious images of more than mortal joy? With the desperate earnestness of one who had never known affection or kindness, and who beheld now a prospect of happiness brighter than his wildest dreams ever portrayed opening upon him, I cast the measureless devotion of a lonely and sensitive soul at her feet. I feared no failure. My own energy of purpose assured me I could not fail. The thought was death, and I drove it away. But in the sweetest moments of assured bliss the cloudy terror of Polycrates rested in my heart. The Samian's question, what I have done to deserve this, I could not answer? Surely some dark and dreadful calamity must lie in wait for one whose joy was too great for man. Watching for the storm, it came from the fairest quarter of heaven and burst on my head.

The amusement of an hour was all she sought, but it won the idolatry of an honest and warm heart. When she wearied of my devotion, I was cast aside as the merest toy. Her step was as light—her laugh was as gay, and her eye was bright as ever—but for me—no matter now.

In the gilded halls of fashion that I may now enter as an equal, I sometimes see her yet. Her eye would still assert its power, but alas! I am callous and cold as rock. I love her no more. I conquered my passion by no effort. It wore away by degrees as fancy faded, and the business of life opened upon me. But its consequences I still feel—it made me what I am, a lonesome man, delighting in the society of my fellows—a friendless man, constitutionally craving for love and sympathy—a man of business, naturally dreamy and indolent—a man without domestic ties, yearning for the indulgence of household affections—a young man in years, but alas! I fear with the chillness of age in my heart.

And so no more of love disappointments. I turn gladly to the memory of one whom I never loved. What name shall I invent for the gentle image that I see before me now? Her own sweet appellation can never be profaned by the lips of strangers. I may whisper it in my solitary walks as that of a watching angel, but not to mortal ear. What shall express early girlhood, playful gentleness, susceptibility most acute, and beauty most pure and star-like—Lucy May? the same in the number of syllables—the same in softness and poetic association—then be it Lucy May. It is a sweet and unpretending name, bearing with it pleasant thoughts of the brightness and glory of the spring, and redolent of the joyous, yet gentle and loving creature to whom I have attached it. Yet is her own unwritten name sweeter to me—it may be folly, it may be fancy, but it calls up thoughts pleasanter than the fair face of nature or the harmonies of her music.

But a few doors from the office of my preceptor stood a new and handsome house, built at some distance from the street, so as to leave a wide expanse of pavement before it, over which swung the little branches of a huge old elm. This was occupied when I commenced my studies by one whom wealth had not availed to shield from sorrow. She was, as I afterward learned, the widow of an officer in the civil service of the English government in one of the West India Islands, who had originally sought that station in order to prolong, for a few years a life, the fountains of which were well nigh exhausted. For a long time the mild climate fostered hopes of recovery, but the seeds of death were sown in his vitals, and he perished. Reasons unknown to me induced his widow to reside temporarily in ——. I saw her frequently as she passed with her two daughters by my window in the pleasant afternoons of summer. The expression of her face was mild and thoughtful, but it told of long and patient suffering. The elder of her girls was of surpassing though undeveloped beauty.

The pensive countenance of the mother had, perhaps, shadowed a little the gaiety of her early innocence—but there was in its room a tenderness and lovingness of nature that called blessings on her head from strangers in the streets. I, who loved with my whole soul the fair and graceful, whether of animate or inanimate nature, gazed on her dark, lustrous eyes and her sun-kissed cheek as upon the embodied phantasm of my dreams. She seemed to me like the glorious creation of some one of those passionate old painters, who, blending their earthly loves with their heavenly aspirations, have clothed seraphic perfection in the fairest attributes of mortal beauty. When the loneliness of my lot, shut out as I was by circumstances and my own wayward will from society, pressed heavy on my soul, the sound of her flute-like laugh or the echo of her elastic step was enough to dispel the darkest illusions.

She, while her sprightlier sister gambolled on the unfrequented pathway, would, half as a monitor, half as a playmate, alternately chide and join in the harmless mirth of the child. After a time the children, for the elder was not more than fifteen, spied me as I sat the livelong day behind my serge curtain. Somehow we became acquainted. First the younger with a child's privilege nodded her demure little head and kissed her fingers as in awful respect. Then she would bound away to her sister with a mischievous laugh, and whispers followed, of which I was evidently the subject. Lucy would reprove her then, as I knew by the uplifted finger and mock gravity of aspect. We were soon good friends, however, and they came every evening about sundown, when they knew I was alone, and talked to me of their studies, their friends, and southern home. Lucy had not the precocious intelligence that bewilders itself in the technicalities of science. The kindly confidence of childhood was as yet unshaken by book acquired knowledge of evil. Childish toil and thought, the curse of after years, had traced no line on her white and innocent brow—nor had evil passion clouded its purity with one taint of forbidden feeling. No forgotten wrongs, dim and shadowy in the awful past, appalled her soul with the fear of vengeance that might come and ought to come. She knew nought of remorse for half remembered crime—and so, guiltless of wrong and fearless of harm, she hesitated not to give her confidence to me—and at length the sisters came to know me well, and would stand by my low window in the evening, and pour into my ear their little plans of pleasure, or the fancies of their guileless minds about the stars that peeped from the sky. When I told them of the immensity

of the heavens, and that the stars shone and shone forever, they peopled those bright worlds with angelic hosts, and longed to be with them.

How earnestly would Lucy listen while her sister romped at large, to my talk of myself and my lonely life in a great city, poor, friendless and in feeble health; and with what anxious tones of inquiry would she ask me of my suffering when my countenance told of illness.

How clearly I see her now, beautiful and child-like as when I saw her last long years ago, with a few natural flowers twisted in her dark hair, and her eyes alternately swimming and sparkling, as she uttered her sorrow at leaving us and her hopes of seeing her southern friends again. I see still the same gentle and relying smile—the same dark eye, and hear the same words of kindness and affection then lavished upon me.

It is a pleasant remembrance and not unworthy of manhood, that I was an object of kindness to that guileless and beautiful child. No spot in the whole past shimmers more brightly.

And where is she now? Have years stiffened that elastic motion? dimmed that bright eye, or shrunken and paled that full lip and ruddy cheek? Has sorrow, or care, or sickness bowed that delicate and graceful form? or saddened the temperament already too thoughtful? Has that feeling given for the best blessing of our race, but often its darkest curse, cast a shadow on the heaven of her purity? Has she formed those ties that bind us to life for others, when for ourselves we would gladly lay it down? Has the warm heart not calloused in its intercourse with the world? Does the same smile that startled the beholder with an involuntary thought of the angels, still lighten the dreamy repose of her countenance?

Her fate may be sad—her heart changed—her beauty decayed—stormy passion with its bitter fruit may have clouded her brow and strung the soft voice to harsher tones. The ever-urgent realities of life may have quelled the gay imaginations of girlhood, and the exclusiveness of passion have supplanted the spontaneous love and kindness that lavished itself on all that had life.

Ten years that have made the dreamy boy a hard and toiling man—the poor and friendless student, a rising and prosperous lawyer—that have changed *me* in all save the loneliness of an exacting heart, may well have veiled the loveliness of her nature with new, perhaps, dark shades. But not so, I delight to remember her. The springing step, the antelope eye, the ringing laugh fade not in the creature that haunts my memory. Her image comes back to me often when the controversies of my calling, (one generative of hard and scornful feeling) have left in my breast the bitterness of their gall—soothing

and quieting the stormy excitement that lingers in my veins long after the lying witnesses or the stupid jury have ceased to hear my voice.

I complain not of the world—I owe it much—my labor it has rewarded, and it has done justice to my character. It is made of people as good and as feeling as I am. Each one has his own circle of loved and protected beings, wherein he pours whatever wealth of affection he has to bestow. His right to love and be beloved is from nature—but whence is mine?

I am alone and without the ties of blood connecting me with any living being, unpleasing in aspect, uncouth in gesture and speech—and I am not—nay, I never have been loved. Painful was the process that taught me this conclusion—bitter and deadly the feeling which it engendered, and which I conquered—and sad and calm is the hopeless certainty that the love of woman can never be mine.

Miser-like I turn to my hidden treasure. Here in my silent chamber with my books and fire and comfortable arm-chair, at this hour of midnight memory refuses to dwell on the shame and wrong and deception, which have been my lot as they are the lot of every one, and gladly summons up shapes of joy and beauty and love. Bright and well beloved is thine, sweet Lucy May—more so, perhaps, than thy living self would be wert thou now before me—more so from the lapse of years which has cast golden tints around thy idea—more so from thy association with pleasant remembrances of youth—more so from the mystery that has since covered thy path—and more so from internal consciousness that never, *never* again while my soul preserves its identity can it feel again that which it can so well remember, or love again as it loved those to whom it has grown callous.





A LEAP YEAR TALE.

BY MARY DAVENANT.

Two gentlemen were enjoying the freshness of a summer twilight in the pleasant library of a house in one of the principal streets of Philadelphia. One was a well whiskered, well to do in the world looking man, and by the *je ne sais quoi* by which one can tell a married man at a single glance, evidently a Benedick of some years standing. A look round the apartment, and at Mr. Charles Harvey, who is its owner, tells us that he is still on the bachelor's list. The gentlemen were seated by an open window in luxurious arm chairs, and so far it looked comfortable enough; but there was a certain want of elegance of arrangement throughout the really handsome establishment which showed that its presiding genius was one of the stronger sex.

A servant soon entered to prepare the tea-table, and presently Mr. Harvey seated himself to pour out tea for his guest. Mr. Waters watched his operations for a while in silence, at length he exclaimed—"I tell you what, Harry, I am actually attacked with such a violent fit of homesickness every time I see you sitting there, 'pouring out,' as the ladies call it, that I feel tempted to set off at once for my own home, where I can see bright, happy faces round my board, and a delicate hand mixing my tea exactly to my taste. I have scarcely tasted a cup fit to drink since I have been here, and I verily believe it is because there is no lady to pour it out for me. Why don't you marry like a sensible man, and know what domestic comfort is?"

Mr. Harvey looked confused and made sundry mistakes in the preparation of the beverage, which called forth the severe animadversions of his friend, who finished by pouring the mixture into the slop bowl, and then compounded one himself that seemed to suit him better. After this was happily settled Mr. Waters resumed the subject.

"Jesting apart, Harvey, I am really curious to know why you have not married. Your tastes are domestic, your affections strong, and your circumstances good. You are now past thirty, and if you remain a bachelor much longer you will run a risk of being taken in by some artful girl, who will marry you for the sake of your money, and care not a button for yourself."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Harvey.

"Amen, with all my heart," said his friend—"but you have not answered my question."

"It is one I have been hoping you would ask ever since you have been with me—for I could not bear to enter on the subject myself much as I need advice and sympathy."

At last she said—"Mr. Harvey, you will think it strange that I should seek this interview, but we leave this place to-morrow, and I must know before we part the reason of this sudden change. You are an old and valued friend, and your coldness has pained us all. There is some sad misunderstanding—cannot it be rectified? Must a friendship such as ours be severed without at least a word of explanation?"

"Miss Vernon must pardon me—I have been ill, and for some weeks absent from home—otherwise I should have taken an earlier opportunity of congratulating her upon her approaching marriage."

"My approaching marriage!" repeated Constance—"with whom, pray?"

"It cannot surely have already taken place," said Harvey turning pale—"I did not see Sir George Millwood among the guests this evening."

"Sir George Millwood is now on his way to England," replied Constance, "where in a short time he will be married to my sister Louisa. His visit here was partly to obtain my father's consent to the marriage, and partly to get out of the way of the solicitations of his family, who insisted he should marry an heiress by no means agreeable to him."

"Is this possible?—and did my jealous fancy deceive me when I saw your hand in his, and tears of tenderness streaming from your eyes?"

"You saw tears of sympathy for the trials of my sister and my friend—nothing further I assure you. I had been listening to a love tale, but I was not the heroine, as I think you must now acknowledge. Come, are we friends again?" she added, extending her hand with a look that penetrated his heart.

"Constance!—dear Constance!" said Harvey as he pressed it to his lips—and Constance did not chide him for the freedom, though she shed tears—sweet tears of happiness as she stood there in the charmed moonlight and listened, and felt that she could listen thus forever.

Harvey's surprise could only be equalled by his joy when, a few days after, he received the ready approbation of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon to his suit; an approbation which he now learned would have been as readily given years before, when first he won their daughter's love and their regard, as it was granted now: the family pride of the old gentleman being in fact a quite harmless foible, cherished for his own private gratification, little dreaming it could interfere with the happiness of others. Thus Harvey's own pride and sensitiveness were constantly creating imaginary difficulties, and had not Constance at last sought an explanation, (it was leap year as it now is, gentle reader—you will forgive her, therefore,)

it is possible he might still have remained a despairing lover instead of a living contradiction to the truth of the assertion that, "faint heart never won fair lady." He persists, however, in asserting, and Constance believes him, that his love for her, even when hopeless, was ever the greatest blessing of his life; that like a magic wand it encircled him with purifying influences, through which he became worthy of the devoted affection with which she returns it—an affection that time has only strengthened during the years that have passed since she became his wife.

"Aha! a love story—the old song, I suppose, 'the course of true love never did run smooth?' Harvey, from my soul, I pity you—I had something of the kind to endure myself, and it almost broke my heart, stout as it now seems."

"My love, alas! has had no course at all, but is all pent up here, still and deep, wearing away my very heart. If you have patience to listen to my story I will tell it to you."

The curiosity of Mr. Waters soon conquered his appetite, and when the table was removed Mr. Harvey began.

"You remember the Vernons whom we met in Paris four years ago?"

"To be sure I do—a conceited old father, proud as a German baron with sixteen quarterings; a gentle, high-bred mother, and two glorious daughters—which was it?—that lovely, golden haired blonde whose glance seemed to melt your very soul, or the brilliant, dark eyed younger sister?"

"The elder—I had loved her from her childhood, though until we met abroad we had never spoken—I shall never forget the impression she made upon me when I first saw her. It was on a summer evening, soon after I had come a friendless lad to this place. I was seated at a window of my humble lodgings which overlooked the garden of a large and handsome house, thinking of the beloved parents and sister that I had lost—of the home of my youth, embosomed as it was among the blue hills of our beautiful state, and of the hopes I once had cherished of rising to eminence by a life of intellectual effort. The graves of my household were now green in the distant valley—I was left alone with my destiny in life wholly changed. My college studies were forsaken for the day-book and ledger in the counting-house of my present partners, where I was surrounded by a set of dissipated youths, whose society was hateful to me. My only solace was in my books, and all the evenings I could spare from business were devoted to them. Sometimes, however, I was too weary for any occupation, and then sad recollections would more than ever crowd upon me. On the evening I allude to I had been more than usually depressed, when my attention was attracted by some delightful music, and looking across the garden toward the house whence it proceeded, I saw a lovely child in the brilliantly lighted room, whose likeness to my sister made her seem like a personation of the thoughts that had occupied me. She had been reading at a table near the window, but had now thrown back the rich curls that had fallen over her face, and was listening to a duett sung in a masterly style by two elder sisters.

"She was evidently one of a numerous and

accomplished family, but I scarcely observed the other members of it. My whole soul was riveted on Constance—for it was she—and strange as it may seem to you, from that hour she became the centre of all the fond imaginings of my boyhood. She could not at this time have been more than ten years old, I was eighteen—her family were proud and wealthy, occupying the first place in a circle into which I never hoped to gain admittance. Still I often saw her; sometimes playing with her younger sister among the garden flowers; sometimes with her satchel on her arm wending her way to school, and I felt that it was happiness even to look on one so lovely and so associated with domestic joys that were lost to me forever.

"Her two elder sisters soon married, one an English gentleman of fortune, the other a distinguished man in one of our southern states. Five years ago Mr. Vernon took his family abroad to visit Mrs. Colville, the eldest daughter, and soon after I was despatched by my employers on some mercantile business to Germany. To my great joy we chanced to meet in Paris, where we occupied the same hotel, and I frequently encountered them both at public places, and at the house of our Ambassador."

"I remember well," said Mr. Waters, "our meeting them at the Louvre, and how I wondered at your prating so knowingly about the fine arts as you did to them—one would have thought you had lived among the old masters from your boyhood."

"Well—I cannot tell you what my feelings toward Constance then were. For years she had been the idol of my imagination, but I found the charms of the real being far surpassed those with which my fancy endowed her. I had seen that she was beautiful, had heard that she was amiable and accomplished, but I had never dreamed of such a revelation of purity, grace, refinement and perfect nobility of nature, as day by day gradually opened to me. My business in Germany having been settled more speedily than I expected, I was enabled to linger several weeks in Paris, and afterward to join the Vernons in a short tour through Switzerland. I had thought I appreciated Constance when she had been my companion in the world of art, but there was a deeper, fuller happiness in wandering with her through the lovelier realm of nature. Several other gentlemen were of the party, two of them Englishmen of rank—vapid, silly creatures, to be seen ever feigning raptures that they could not feel, and my heart would often thrill with joy when Constance, inspired with the grandeur and beauty of the varied scenes that were spread before us, would turn from them to me as if she saw that I best could sympathize with the feelings that penetrated

her. The gentleness, too, with which she would submit to the inconveniences which so often try the temper of the traveller, and under which her parents and her sister Louisa were anything but patient; her kindness to the poor peasants we would meet, and the deep religious feeling which seemed to pervade her whole being showed me that if pre-eminent in personal and intellectual gifts, in moral beauty she was richer still. But I will not tire you with my raptures—enough that when at last I was obliged to tear myself away while they proceeded to Italy, I was deeply, hopelessly in love."

"Why hopelessly—was she already engaged?" asked Mr. Waters. "If not, had not a handsome, intelligent fellow like you as good a chance as any one?"

"I—with my miserable stipends—of humble birth and inferior position think to win her, the loveliest and proudest in the land? No—the thought was folly—madness. Yet there was a strange happiness in loving her, even despairingly as I did. One might cherish such a passion for an angel, so utterly hopeless was it, yet it made me a better man—elevating my mind and purifying every feeling—leading me to strive after all that was really great, and to trample all that was mean and grovelling beneath my feet.

"On my return home I led the same solitary life that I had before, avoiding all society, devoting my days to business and my evenings to study and to Constance. True, she was far distant, but her image was always present to soothe and cheer my lonely hours. I remember at that time reading a German legend of a knight who devoted himself to the service of a spirit mistress, who in times of danger and distress would revive his courage by permitting him to behold the waving of her golden hair; a more perfect revelation being impossible, until by deeds of virtue he had won an entrance to the world of spirits. The story impressed me strangely, and like Aslanga's knight I would often fancy I saw the bright locks of her I loved gleam on me in the darkness, as if accepting an allegiance as hopeless as his own.

"It was more than a year before Mr. Vernon and his family returned, and the blush and smile with which Constance received me when we met assured me that I was not quite forgotten. Ah! how many a baseless fabric did I build on that one look. My manner may possibly have betrayed my long cherished feelings, for on succeeding visits the friendliness of my reception by the rest of the family was diminished, (though, thank heaven! that of Constance was the same) and her two brothers, whom till now I had never seen, treated me with a haughty superciliousness

that wounded me deeply. I therefore refrained from going to the house, and saw Constance only at church or by accident. So went on the affair sadly enough for me, until the legacy of that odd humorist who took such an unaccountable fancy to me, enabled me to obtain a partnership in our concern, and with the assured prospect of competence, if not of wealth, came a distant hope of winning her on whom my affections were so unalterably fixed. By this time several changes had occurred in Mr. Vernon's family that were rather favorable to me. His eldest son had married, and the younger had received an appointment as secretary to a foreign embassy. Louisa had also accompanied him abroad to pay another visit to her sister in England, where she still remains. Constance was, therefore, the only child at home, and when I again presented myself at the house, I was received by her and her mother with all their former cordiality. The old gentleman, too, gradually relaxed his usual stiffness, and I was soon established with them quite as an intimate friend.

"Still I had little on which I could build a hope. Constance was a most dutiful and devoted daughter, and I well knew that her father, as bigoted an aristocrat as my country could produce, would object to her union with one of my obscure birth. Her mother was in all things perfectly subservient to him, and when Mr. Vernon would enlarge, as he was very fond of doing, upon the past greatness of his family, her eye would brighten at the tale, told for the hundredth time, while my heart would sink at the mountain of prejudice to be overcome before I could reach the haven of my wishes. For months I remained thus fluctuating between hope and fear, until at length, encouraged by the unvarying kindness of Constance's manner, and the interest she appeared to take in my society, I determined to throw off the guise of friendship and thus end the uncertainty that tormented me.

"I had occasionally met at Mr. Vernon's an Englishman of the name of Millwood, who had brought letters to them from Mrs. Colville, the eldest daughter. Being quite a handsome young man, and moreover the heir of a baronet of large fortune, he had received a good deal of attention in society; but as he was rather shy and reserved in his manner, he seemed to care but little for company, and to prefer a quiet evening at Mr. Vernon's to any of the gayety that was going forward. With a stupidity that now seems to me like infatuation, I had never thought of Millwood as a rival, though I had fancied one in a dozen different men far less dangerous. He was so quiet in his manner, said so little—to Constance, scarcely anything when I was present—

commonly sitting beside Mr. Vernon listening to his prosing conversation, occasionally picking up Mrs. Vernon's knitting needles and balls of worsted, and altogether seeming the most harmless person in existence. Judge of my surprise when one morning, about two months ago, I was shown into the dressing-room, fully determined to take the first opportunity of knowing my fate, at finding Constance tête-à-tête with Mr. Millwood, her beautiful eyes filled with tears of tenderness, while he, holding her hand, was speaking most earnestly—both being so absorbed that neither were aware of my entrance.

"You may imagine my feelings at this utter annihilation of my hopes. Confounded beyond measure, I was about retreating hastily, when in my confusion I stumbled over an ottoman, which aroused the attention of the lovers, and I was compelled to go through the ordeal of a visit. Constance was at first a little embarrassed, but she soon recovered herself, and while I was suffering the tortures of a fallen spirit, decked her face with smiles, and talked with all her usual animation—Mr. Millwood sitting by, relapsed into his usual indifference. As soon as I decently could, I left the house as if pursued by a thousand furies, and have never since entered it. Mrs. Vernon has sent me two invitations to small parties, but I have refused them both. Constance is lost to me forever, and I cannot yet bear her presence. Fool that I was ever to cherish hope! While I loved her as a 'bright, peculiar star' beyond my reach, but shedding a holy influence on my spirit I was happy—filled with high endeavors to become all that I knew she revered. Now I am wretched."

Harvey here ceased, and it was long before he became sufficiently composed to listen to the long harangue his friend now made, first on his own faint heartedness, secondly upon the propriety of forgetting Constance immediately and conquering of his old love by substituting a new one in its place, together with many common place arguments usual on such occasions, to which, however, it must be confessed his patient seemed to give but little heed. After retiring that night Mr. Waters reflected deeply on his friend's case, and at length came to the conclusion that the kindest thing he could do would be to take him to his own home where he might witness the pleasures of domestic life, and last, though not least, see a pretty black eyed cousin of his wife, who would, he hoped, obliterate the memory of his former love.

So said, so done. Harvey journeyed homeward with his friend, but the domestic happiness only seemed to increase his despondency, and the black eyed cousin smiled in vain. News soon

followed him of the succession of Mr. Millwood to his baronetcy, and of his intended marriage to Miss Vernon, to whom he had been for some time secretly engaged. Such was the effect of this announcement upon Harvey's health and spirits that Mr. and Mrs. Waters prescribed a visit to Saratoga, which was not very far distant from their home, and proposed to accompany him thither.

Harvey would fain have shunned the brilliant scene which accorded so ill with his present feelings, but his friends were imperative, and he was at last obliged to yield to their wishes. But how bitterly did he repent of having done so, when almost the first person he saw on entering the crowded saloon the evening after his arrival was Constance Vernon. She looked, he thought, paler than usual, though a slight flush rose upon her cheek as she returned his distant bow. It had, however, faded entirely away when his eye, after seeking Mr. Millwood in vain among those who surrounded her, rested again upon her face.

Constance was indeed fair to look upon as she stood amidst the over-dressed daughters of fashion in her simple costume of white, unadorned save by a single rose in the rich curls of her hair. Tall, graceful and dignified, her features very beautiful, it was, however, the character that shone in her countenance which gave it its rarest charm. The brow and eye were highly intellectual, while the expression of the finely formed mouth told of the kind and generous affections to which it would give utterance. The music now poured forth its inspiring strains, and after seeing Constance led to her place in the dance by a dashing exquisite, Harvey left the room and sought the most distant angle of the portico, there to meditate in solitude on all that he had lost.

The night was soft and beautiful, a brilliant moon added her glory to that of the starry host, and shone as if in mockery of the dark, troubled spirit that was now gazing on her. "Why should I be so wretched?" he soliloquized, "she is happy—and did I love her truly, with a pure, unselfish love, I should rejoice that she is so, even while my heart bleeds with its own wounds. She has chosen freely, and can I blame her choice? Why can I not love her as I did in my early youth—as I did before hope came with her illusions to lead me to despair?"

He had long been indulging undisturbed in such reflections when aroused, by a light footstep approaching him, he raised his head from the column against which it rested, and saw Constance at his side. She looked pale and agitated, her long curls were pushed from her brow and fell in their rich volume upon her shoulders. She stood in silence for a moment, while Harvey was too much surprised to utter a syllable.

At last she said—"Mr. Harvey, you will think it strange that I should seek this interview, but we leave this place to-morrow, and I must know before we part the reason of this sudden change. You are an old and valued friend, and your coldness has pained us all. There is some sad misunderstanding—cannot it be rectified? Must a friendship such as ours be severed without at least a word of explanation?"

"Miss Vernon must pardon me—I have been ill, and for some weeks absent from home—otherwise I should have taken an earlier opportunity of congratulating her upon her approaching marriage."

"My approaching marriage!" repeated Constance—"with whom, pray?"

"It cannot surely have already taken place," said Harvey turning pale—"I did not see Sir George Millwood among the guests this evening."

"Sir George Millwood is now on his way to England," replied Constance, "where in a short time he will be married to my sister Louisa. His visit here was partly to obtain my father's consent to the marriage, and partly to get out of the way of the solicitations of his family, who insisted he should marry an heiress by no means agreeable to him."

"Is this possible?—and did my jealous fancy deceive me when I saw your hand in his, and tears of tenderness streaming from your eyes?"

"You saw tears of sympathy for the trials of my sister and my friend—nothing further I assure you. I had been listening to a love tale, but I was not the heroine, as I think you must now acknowledge. Come, are we friends again?" she added, extending her hand with a look that penetrated his heart.

"Constance!—dear Constance!" said Harvey as he pressed it to his lips—and Constance did not chide him for the freedom, though she shed tears—sweet tears of happiness as she stood there in the charmed moonlight and listened, and felt that she could listen thus forever.

Harvey's surprise could only be equalled by his joy when, a few days after, he received the ready approbation of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon to his suit; an approbation which he now learned would have been as readily given years before, when first he won their daughter's love and their regard, as it was granted now: the family pride of the old gentleman being in fact a quite harmless foible, cherished for his own private gratification, little dreaming it could interfere with the happiness of others. Thus Harvey's own pride and sensitiveness were constantly creating imaginary difficulties, and had not Constance at last sought an explanation, (it was leap year as it now is, gentle reader—you will forgive her, therefore,)

it is possible he might still have remained a despairing lover instead of a living contradiction to the truth of the assertion that, "faint heart never won fair lady." He persists, however, in asserting, and Constance believes him, that his love for her, even when hopeless, was ever the greatest blessing of his life; that like a magic wand it encircled him with purifying influences, through which he became worthy of the devoted affection with which she returns it—an affection that time has only strengthened during the years that have passed since she became his wife.

